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LOVERS AND HUSBANDS:



A STORY OF MARRIED LIFE.

BY

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"SIX NIGHTS WITH THE WASHINGTONIANS," &C., &C.

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MAIN

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

THE TWO MAIDENS	Page 5
---------------------------	--------

CHAPTER II.

AN AUTUMN WALK	13
--------------------------	----

CHAPTER III.

A BRILLIANT LOVER	20
-----------------------------	----

CHAPTER IV.

THE DECLARATION	26
---------------------------	----

CHAPTER V.

A WEDDING	34
---------------------	----

CHAPTER VI.

A MAN OF THE WORLD	44
------------------------------	----

CHAPTER VII.

FLORA'S TWO SUITERS	51
-------------------------------	----

CHAPTER VIII.

AN ACT OF OPPRESSION	59
--------------------------------	----

CHAPTER IX.

DISCOVERY OF CHARACTER	66
----------------------------------	----

CHAPTER X.

DECLINING AN OFFER UPON PRINCIPLE	74
---	----

	Page
CHAPTER XI.	
ANOTHER BRIDAL	82
CHAPTER XII.	
TIME'S DEVELOPMENTS	87
CHAPTER XIII.	
SAD CONSEQUENCES OF A WRONG MARRIAGE	95
CHAPTER XIV.	
LOST AFFECTIONS	103
CHAPTER XV.	
THE NEGLECTED WIFE	113
CHAPTER XVI.	
A GAMBLING HUSBAND	119
CHAPTER XVII.	
FLEECING A PLANTER	127
CHAPTER XVIII.	
A MELANCHOLY HISTORY	133
CHAPTER XIX.	
DREADFUL CONSEQUENCES OF EVIL	140
CHAPTER XX.	
THE WRECK OF EARLY HOPES	144
CHAPTER XXI.	
CONCLUSION	152

LOVERS AND HUSBANDS.

CHAPTER I.

THE TWO MAIDENS.

Two maidens sat in earnest conversation one quiet afternoon in October, near the window of a tasteful cottage which looked out upon a gently-declining lawn, encircled by elms that still retained their thick foliage. Beyond this lawn was a dense wood, gayly attired in its many-coloured autumn robes. The rays of the setting sun fell broad and unobstructed upon the bosom of this forest, lending to each gaudy leaf, or to the half-revealed silvery branches and trunks of the trees, a glittering lustre that dazzled the eye.

"See, Flora!" said one of the maidens, suddenly interrupting their conversation, and glancing out of the window as she spoke: "is there anything in nature more beautiful than an autumn sunset?"

"Nothing," returned her companion, half abstractedly, as her eyes followed the direction of her companion's. Then speaking with a sudden animation, inspired by the scene, she added,

"Beautiful, very beautiful! See, Emily, how the sun's declining rays fall in broad masses of golden light over that more sombre and distant portion of the forest, softening it down, and blending it in exquisite harmony, like a skilfully-laid

background, with the brighter picture that stands out nearer and in more gorgeous colouring."

"A living and real picture—not cold, inanimate canvass."

"Yes, living and real. That strong-armed, deep-bosomed oak, upon whose outermost branches lingers the sun's parting rays, is a different thing from the oak of the painter, no matter how perfect his work may be; and in looking at it, we have a different feeling. We admire the work of art, but we love the work of nature. In looking at the real tree, we have a consciousness that it is the actual, living correspondent of something in ourselves. That there is between us, or a certain principle in us and the tree, an affinity; as there is between us, or certain principles in us, and every flower or bird—between us and everything, animate or inanimate, in the world of creation. It is from this cause that we are peculiarly and variously affected by the sight of natural objects—affected in a different way than by objects the work of men's hands. The latter awake admiration, if beautiful; but nature stirs something within us that is far deeper than a cold approval."

Flora Elton, who thus spoke, was the daughter of a widow who owned the neat cottage in which she lived, the same that stood near the fine old woods just alluded to. She was not a maiden of showy exterior, nor were her manners and address such as to attract the attention of a stranger, unless he were more than a superficial observer; and yet she had a mind that was richly stored, and affections that were warm, chastened, and refined. Her companion, Emily Clarence, was her

opposite in temperament and manner. While Flora half shrunk from observation, and, therefore, attracted little notice, Emily's bright, animated, really beautiful face, combined with her great sprightliness and brilliant powers of conversation, made her a general favourite in company, and, in consequence, the recipient of the most general attentions. The one was quiet and thoughtful at all times; the other gay and imposing, and pleased with the admiration she won. Opposites in character, they were yet bosom friends, and had been for years.

The pleasant cottage in which Flora dwelt with her mother was in New-Jersey, about five miles from the city of New-York. Mrs. Elton, during the lifetime of her husband, resided in the city, where she still had many friends. Among these was Mrs. Clarence, whose daughter Emily spent a portion of every summer at Rose Hill, Mrs. Elton's unimposing yet tasteful seat. In turn, Flora passed a part of her time in the city during the winter. Thus were the two maidens brought much together, and the consequence was, that their attachment grew from a girlish preference into a deep, sisterly regard.

The conversation, which had been interrupted by Emily's remark upon the beauty of the old woods, bathed in the golden rays of an autumn sunset, was resumed after a brief interruption.

"And so you do not admire Mr. Whitney?" Emily said, assuming a gayer tone.

"I have seen but little of him," Flora replied. "That little, however, I am free to confess, has not prepossessed me in his favour."

"I am sure he is a very handsome man," Emily said.

"A handsome man and a good man are two things."

"No doubt of that, Flora. But do you know that Mr. Whitney is not a good man?"

"Oh no, of course I do not. I only made the remark to show that I thought we ought to look a little deeper than the surface."

"Of course. Still, external beauty and external accomplishments are to be regarded. For my part, I could not love a dull-looking, awkward, homely man. Could you?"

Flora's cheek slightly flushed as she replied,

"Yes; if his mind were clear, orderly, and beautiful."

"It is more than I could, then. I would put up, cheerfully, with some mental defects, if the man of my choice were handsome in person, well educated, refined in his intercourse with society, and fairly to do in the world. I want a husband of whom I shall be proud. To be tied to a mere dull, lifeless drone, would kill me. I could not go into society with him and avoid being mortified to death; and if I went without him, I should be subjected to remarks of an unpleasant kind. But see! if there isn't that insipid Doctor Arlington again! I wonder what brings him here! If there wasn't a scarcity of beaux in these parts, I would be half inclined to ask him if he came to see Nancy, the cook. But I would die if I didn't see a man's face now and then. So I suppose I shall have to tolerate the doctor as a necessary evil."

Doctor Arlington, the unconscious subject of

these disparaging remarks, had by this time reached the door, and Emily felt it prudent to check her rather free tongue. Certainly no one who looked into his face for the first time would pronounce him a very handsome man, and it is much to be doubted whether any one would have called him an agreeable companion after sitting an hour with him during the first interview. Still, Doctor Arlington had his good points, and these were intrinsic, like the good points in a piece of virgin ore. He could not dance, nor play on the flute, nor talk French; nor was he, indeed, at all externally accomplished. He was diffident, too, and awkward, and reserved in company. But, although but twenty-five, he was deeply skilled in his profession, and, as a physician, had the fullest confidence of the community in which he resided; and, besides, he was a man of firm, well-arranged principles, and possessed a warm heart.

In a moment or two after Emily uttered her light remarks, Doctor Arlington stood in the door of the room where the young ladies were seated. He felt awkward and embarrassed, as he always did when his visits were unprofessional, and to young ladies. He looked just as awkward and embarrassed as he felt. Emily, as she arose and courtesied formally, could scarcely help smiling in the young man's face, while Flora experienced a want of self-possession which she had never before known on meeting him. The colour rose to her face, and it was some moments before she was sufficiently composed to receive him with her usual kindness and attention. Conversation dragged on very heavily during the hour that Doctor Arlington

spent with the young ladies—much more heavily than it had ever done with him and Flora, even while the mother of the latter made one of the company. As the twilight began to thicken around, the visiter arose to depart. He was urged by Mrs. Elton, who had joined them, to remain to tea, and spend the evening ; but he excused himself on the ground of professional engagements, and withdrew, not, however, without nearly falling backward, as he bowed out, awkwardly, from the presence of the young ladies.

“ I wish in my heart he had fallen !” Emily said, laughing gayly, as soon as he was out of hearing.

“ Why so, Emily ?” asked Mrs. Elton, half smiling.

“ Oh, because he is so ugly and awkward. I have no patience with an awkward booby of a man.”

“ While for a handsome fellow, even if a villain, you would entertain the most exalted regard ?”

“ As to that, Mrs. Elton,” Emily returned, laughing, “ I don’t believe a real handsome man can be a bad man.”

“ Time will teach you a different lesson from that, child. The most heartless man I ever knew had the most attractive external I remember to have seen.”

“ Was he accomplished ?”

“ Yes, in everything that could make him agreeable.”

“ Then I should say that he was the seventh wonder of the world.”

“ No ; not a seventh wonder, nor any wonder at all. Such specious, handsome, heartless, accom-

plished men, are to be found in almost every fashionable circle—winning young hearts but to break them.”

“A story with which to frighten naughty children!” laughingly replied Emily Clarence. “But I’ll be a good girl, Mrs. Elton—never fear.”

“Be wise as well as good, my child,” was the rather serious remark of Mrs. Elton, as she turned away and left the room, half sighing for the gay thoughtlessness of one whose many good qualities had won from her more than an evanescent regard.

“For whom was that visit intended, Flora?” Emily asked, turning with a mischievous face to her young friend as soon as Mrs. Elton had withdrawn. “For you or for me?”

“For both of us, in all probability.”

“Oh no, no! Doctor Arlington never could pick up the courage to visit two young ladies a once. A call upon one is enough for his delicate nerves.”

“He knew there was more than one young lady at Rose Hill.”

“No one would have thought so this evening!”

“Why, Emily, what do you mean?”

“I mean as I have said, that no one would have thought he knew there was more than a single *young* lady present this evening. I don’t believe he looked at me when he came in, and I am sure he did not speak to me while he remained. He was either afraid to look at me, or unconscious of my presence: the latter, more probably. Take my word for it, Flora, the doctor is deeply smitten with you!”

Flora coloured a good deal at this gay sally and

seemed confused for a few moments. But she rallied herself, and replied, half jestingly,

"A young lady might attract a less harmless insect. The doctor is a very excellent man."

"Oh yes, one of the excellent of the earth, no doubt. But I don't relish him."

"We should not suffer ourselves to entertain unfounded prejudices against any one, Emily. Doctor Arlington cannot help being homely in person, nor can he help being diffident, and sometimes a little awkward. But let us look at the good in him, and estimate him accordingly. If we do that, we shall find the unprepossessing country doctor to be a man worthy of a high regard."

"Well, let old women and clodpoles hold him in as high regard as his good qualities deserve. I shall not find fault with them, nor with him either, if he keep out of my way. But, if he expects me to treat him as a gentleman, he must learn the manners of a gentleman."

Emily spoke with a little warmth. Flora made no reply to this last remark, but dexterously changed the subject of conversation.

CHAPTER II.

AN AUTUMN WALK.

FLORA ELTON and her friend sat at the same window, and looked out upon the same grassy lawn and deep-bosomed forest on the next morning, engaged, as when first introduced, in close conversation. The air, which had been chilled for a week by an early frost, was again genial as spring. A few lingering birds were fluttering about, sending up an occasional song or brief chirrup, while the mild south wind gently stirred the branches and coloured foliage of the trees.

“Our little world within—our sunny world, so bright with promise, has closed our eyes and ears to the beauty of a delicious autumn day,” remarked Flora, looking out upon the pleasant scene. “It is not good to be so much absorbed in either the past or the future, as to lose what the present has to offer. Come, let us go out upon the lawn, and down through that pleasant little grove, to the fields beyond. There is much that we ought to feel on a day like this. Nature has no phasis that does not reflect itself upon the heart, if the heart only turn towards it an undimmed surface. Spring, summer, autumn, winter, are full of instruction, not given didactically, but in pictures, which the eye of all who can look upon and love nature may perceive and enjoy, at the same time that their deeper meanings are whispered in the spirit’s ear.”

Flora arose as she spoke, and drawing her arm

within that of Emily, the two maidens passed out into the open air. A slight crepitation reached the ear of the former as she stepped from the porch upon the grass, causing her to look down upon a withered leaf that her foot had crushed.

“Poor leaf! fallen to rise no more,” she said, half sadly. “And yet,” she added, in a more cheerful voice, “it is not the leaf that is dead, it is only the material form of a leaf that my foot has touched. The leaf—yes, the thousand leaves that were put forth by the tree from which this effigy has but just fallen, are still in the tree in perennial potency. They have only withdrawn from a decaying form. They will take to themselves new forms again when the warm springtime comes, as they have done through many past seasons, and gladden the eye of man with their beauty. No, no, the leaf is not dead—the grass is not withered—the flower has not faded: only what once manifested the leaf, the grass, the flower, have lost their life, their freshness, their loveliness. When the winter is past the leaf will take to itself new clothing, visible to our natural eyes; the grass will spring up, and the flowers will again gladden us with their presence. Will not the rose be the same, and the leaf the same? Here is a bush that every spring gives us its wealth of buds and blossoms. Its flowers are more fragrant than any in the garden. As the sultry heats of summer begin to burn around, the leaves of these blossoms lose their freshness, their colour grows dim, and at last they fall to the ground; but when spring returns, the same sweet flowers come again, and their colours and fragrance are as lovely and de-

lightful as before. They are, in fact, the same flowers; I know them and love them as such."

"A sweet fancy, Flora, but only a fancy. How full you always are of such pleasant dreams. You look upon nature with the poet's eye, not with the eye of reason."

"The eye of the *true* poet sees nothing in nature that the eye of reason may not also perceive. It cannot, I think, require a dreamer of vague dreams to see in a dead leaf merely the form of a leaf, or in the new developments in the spring the same leaves or the same flowers that before clothed the branches or hung upon the stems. Are the elements from which the potent leaf in the tree forms a representation of itself visible to natural eyes, changed in each successive season? or is the form-producing principle itself changed? No! for if that were the fact, the leaf we saw this year would not be like the leaf we saw last year; the flower would be a flower with different quality and odour."

"I cannot look so deep as that, Flora. To me a dead flower that I have loved is dead indeed, and I mourn for it as a friend lost to me forever. With Bryant, at this melancholy season, I can sigh—

'Where are the flowers, the fair young flowers, that lately sprang and stood

In brighter light, and softer airs, a beauteous sisterhood?

Alas! they all are in their graves; the gentle race of flowers
Are lying in their lowly beds, with the fair and good of ours.

* * * * *

'The wind-flower, and the violet, they perished long ago,
And the brier-rose and orchis died amid the summer glow;
But on the hill the golden-rod, and the aster in the wood,
And the yellow sunflower by the brook in autumn's beauty stood,
Till fell the frost from the clear cold heaven, as falls the plague on
men,
And the brightness of their smile was given from upland, glade, and
glen.

‘And now, when comes the calm, mild day, as still such days will
 come,
 To call the squirrel and the bee from out their winter home ;
 When the sound of dropping nuts is heard, though all the trees are
 still,
 And twinkle in the smoky light the waters of the rill :
 The south wind searches for the flowers whose fragrance late he bore,
 And sighs to find them in the wood and by the stream no more.’”

“While I,” returned Flora, “can feel and love
 the more cheerful spirit of Waterston. Let me
 repeat to you his sweet thoughts on ‘Autumn.’”

‘Upon a leaf-strewn walk,
 I wander on amid the sparkling dews ;
 Where autumn hangs, upon her frost-gemm’d stalk,
 Her gold and purple hues :

Where the tall fox-gloves shake
 Their loose bells to the wind, and each sweet flower
 Bows down its perfumed blossoms to partake
 The influence of the hour :

Where the cloud-shadows pass
 With noiseless speed by lovely lake and rill,
 Chasing each other o’er the low, crisp’d grass,
 And up the distant hill ;

Where the clear stream steals on
 Upon its silent path, as it were sad
 To find each downward-gazing flower had gone,
 That made it once so glad.

I number it in days
 Since last I roam’d through this secluded dell,
 Seeking a shelter from the summer rays,
 Where flowers and wild-birds dwell.

While gemm’d with dewdrops bright,
 Green leaves and silken buds are dancing there,
 I moved my lips in murmurs of delight,
 “And bless’d them unawares.”

How changed each sylvan scene !
 Where is the warbling bird ? the sun’s clear ray ?
 The waving brier-rose ? the foliage green,
 That canopied my way ?

Where is the balmy breeze
 That fann’d so late my brow ? the sweet southwest,
 That, whispering music to the listening trees,
 My raptured spirit bless’d ?

Where are the notes of spring ?
 Yet the brown bee still hums his quiet tune,
 And the low shiver of the insect’s wing
 Disturbs the hush of noon.

The thin, transparent leaves,
Like flakes of amber, quiver in the light,
While autumn round her silver fretwork weaves
In glittering hoarfrost white.

Oh, autumn, thou art bless'd !
My bosom heaves with breathless rapture here :
I love thee well, season of mournful rest !
Sweet Sabbath of the year ! ”

“ If the poet had only said ‘ cheerful rest ’ instead of ‘ mournful rest,’ he would have spoken a higher truth. Autumn is the seasons’ rest after the mission of spring and summer is accomplished ; the time when, having finished her labour of love in giving bountifully of her fruits to man and those below him in the scale of animate creation, the earth rests peacefully from her toil. The leaves and flowers have not perished ; they live still in her bosom, as green, as beautiful, as fragrant as ever, and after her Sabbath of rest has passed she will give them to us again. Is not there in all this, Emily, a moral of sweet import ? Our days will pass on, and we shall arrive at the autumn of life, the season of rest, the Sabbath of our year. Shall it be a cheerful or a mournful rest ? When our leaves begin to fade and drop away, one by one, and our branches, stripped of their beautiful foliage, cut sharply the cold, clear sky, shall we feel that the leaves and blossoms are still fresh and green in our bosoms ? We may, Emily ! We shall live in vain if such be not our experience—if such an autumn rest do not await us—if, in the renewed life we live beyond this region, our leaves do not again put forth with a fresher greenness.”

By this time the young friends had passed the grove of tall trees to which Flora had alluded at first, and were in a little island of green, through

which went rippling over white pebbles a narrow brook, that farther on widened into a lake, around which, in the summer days, the wild flowers and tall grass had gathered. Now the former had all departed, and the latter bent down until it lay drooping upon the bosom of the water, over which floated many faded leaves. Near this lake was a rustic seat, and here the maidens rested themselves, hand clasped in hand, and hearts impressed with the scene around them. Nature was mirroring herself in their bosoms ; but to each the spectrum was different. To one it was a well-defined image, to the other dim and distorted ; to one it was cheerful, to the other sad. One could look at nature with the eye of poetic reason, to the other, its hidden meanings were not revealed.

“ See, Flora,” said Emily, pointing to the little lake, and speaking in a subdued and saddened voice, “ how many leaves are floating there ! Ah ! how many hopes will thus be stripped from us, and fall as those withered leaves have fallen, forever lifeless ! ”

“ Yes, Emily, if our hopes regard nothing more intrinsic than leaves—the graceful, the beautiful, the excellent, the useful in exterior—they will fade and fall when the autumn-time comes, and then shall we be sad indeed ; but if, like the tree, our leaves do not exist for themselves alone, but to aid the interior life of our souls, to assist the work of fruit-bearing, we shall not mourn when they are stricken from our branches. Their work will be all done. The fruit will have been gathered, and garnered, and then a sweet Sabbath of rest will be our portion. The tree has produced its fruit, and now is about to rest from its labours. It needs no longer the leaves that before reacted in externals

upon the active life within, and assisted in the development, growth, and maturity of fruit. It therefore casts them aside. Let us be glad that it has performed its true use. Let us think of the fruit, and not of the leaves; and, still farther, let us see in this rest the regathering of its productive energies, that shall again clothe its branches with foliage, and load them with generous fruit."

"Ah, Flora, I wish I could think and feel as you do. I wish I could see a truth concealed, as you do, beneath every object in nature—beneath every change of her varying countenance. To me, the cloud that veils the sky shuts out the thought that far above the sun still shines in peerless splendour. I live too fully in the present, and feel too absorbingly the influence of the present. In the springtime my heart beats lightly: when autumn comes I am sad. I cannot bid adieu to the summer flowers and summer foliage without a sigh of regret. The seasons' Sabbath rest, to which you have so beautifully alluded, I can think about. I perceive that all you say is true; but my heart is too sad at losing the glories of summer—in missing the birds and blossoms—to feel the sweet confidence in the leaf and flowers' return that you do, and to be content to await their coming after the dreary sleep of winter has passed. But see!" and the whole expression of the maiden's face changed—a light passed over it—"there is Charles Whitney. How kind in him to come all the way from the city to cheer the loneliness of pleasant Rose Hill!"

Flora did not seem so much delighted as her companion; but she welcomed the young man, who soon joined them, with cordiality.

CHAPTER III.

AN ATTRACTIVE LOVER.

CHARLES WHITNEY was the son of a New-York merchant. He had received the very best education that money could procure him; but, as he had no settled aims in life beyond the enjoyment of himself in all accessible ways, that education was not applied assiduously to any practical purpose. On leaving college, his father took him into his store, and endeavoured to initiate him into the science of trade; but he made little progress in the acquirement of this science. He could, it is true, perform the mechanical operations required for daybook, journal, and ledger entries—could take off a balance sheet—make equations—or do anything that brought into requisition the mathematical knowledge he had gained at school. But out of the counting-room he was of little use. He had no fancy for a salesman's duties. Where he sold a bill of five hundred dollars, any one of his father's clerks would sell a bill of as many thousands. To illustrate this, let us give a single example.

One morning, contrary to his habit, he was at the store earlier than any of the young men who acted in the capacity of salesmen. He was leaning back in an arm-chair, with his feet on a table, reading the newspaper, when a country customer came in. After shaking hands with him, and passing a few

words of mere compliment, he asked the merchant to go out into the store and look at some goods. As the purchase of goods was the merchant's business, he went with young Whitney, and, after examining sundry cases, both upon the first, second, and third floors, laid out goods to the amount of six hundred dollars.

"Is there nothing else that I can show you?" asked the young man, when the merchant had completed his examinations and purchases.

"Nothing more, I believe," was the half-thoughtful reply.

No farther attempt was made to show or sell goods, and the country merchant, after directing bills to be made out, parted with Whitney at the door of the counting-room. Just as he was leaving the store, the senior salesman intercepted the satisfied buyer.

"Ah, good-morning! good-morning! How are you? I am really glad to see you!" was the warm salutation of the salesman, grasping the customer's hand, and shaking it warmly. "What can I sell you to-day?"

"Nothing more, I believe," returned the merchant. "I have looked over your stock, and laid out all I want."

"But we've a large variety of the very styles of goods suited for your market. We opened them only yesterday. I know you haven't looked over these already."

"Prints, do you mean?"

"Yes."

"I've seen them all, and laid out the patterns that I like best."

"Did you look at our stock of berages ? We have some sweet patterns among them."

"Yes, all of them."

"And our fresh India goods ?"

"Yes."

"Well, come in, any how. You must go over our stock again. I am certain you haven't seen half of it."

And so, leading back the customer, the salesman took him through the house again. When they came down from the upper stories and into the counting-room, the merchant's bill was four thousand dollars instead of six hundred ; and, what was more, he had not purchased a single piece of goods that was not wanted by him, and which he would not have purchased at some other store. The truth was, the salesman understood his business thoroughly. He knew, just as well as his customer, the exact style and quality of goods required ; and these he did not leave him to ask for or hunt out for himself, but took him at once to the case or bale where they were to be found. In this way, he secured to the establishment the full benefit of his customer's real wants as a merchant.

This shows the little interest that was taken by young Whitney in the business. He could have made as good a sale as the clerk, had he qualified himself to do so, by acquiring the necessary information in relation to the wants of customers from different sections of the country. But he did not care to do this. His thoughts were elsewhere. Business was a mere drudgery, and he attended to it only to satisfy his father and keep up appearances. It mattered but little to him whether a

customer made a large bill or a small one. He never thought of its result upon the general business. Pleasure was of much more consequence, and in the pursuit of this, he was often, much too often, away from the store.

Mr. Clarence, the father of Emily, was also occupied in mercantile pursuits, though in a different branch from that engaged in by Mr. Whitney. He was a man who, in his eager pursuit after wealth, had neglected the interests of his child so far as the judicious training of her mind, and the gradual inculcation of true principles were concerned. He sent her to the best schools, and provided for all external accomplishments to the full extent that money would do so. Beyond this he thought but little. He had no doubt but that his daughter would get a good husband—that is, a wealthy and respectable one, as she deserved. He had made her fully worthy of such good fortune, and, as a matter of course, he had no doubt but that it would come. When, therefore, young Whitney began to show signs of preference for Emily, the father was gratified, as might be supposed. Whitney was a very desirable match—all he could wish for his child. He was well educated, handsome, accomplished, of a good family, and, more than all, was in circumstances to provide handsomely for a wife.

To Emily, his attentions, which, a short time before the opening of our story, had become quite marked, were particularly gratifying. His elegant figure, his polished manners, his fascinating conversation, had long before won her admiration. It was not hard for this feeling to subside into a warmer sentiment; and it was rapidly subsiding.

On the part of Whitney, a preference for Emily had been a feeling that soon became apparent to himself. The attractiveness of her manner and the beauty of her face made her a general favourite. She was toasted by the young men when absent, and courted by them when present. There existed among them a pleasant rivalry for her favour: each one who gained it in reality, or only in appearance, making it a matter to boast about among his companions. From these, Flora, who spent many weeks in the city during the winter season, attracted but little attention. By some she was called "the Old Woman," in allusion to her plain appearance and quiet manner; by others, the "Little Quakeress." But there were a few of her own sex who knew her and loved her, and a few of the other sex who always thought a place by her side a peculiar favour. Once a bright butterfly of fashion came fluttering around her, carelessly at first, but soon attracted by her half-concealed loveliness—the loveliness of heart, and mind, and manner, when both were seen to exist, the one from the other, in a beautiful and perfect series. He lavished upon her his most devoted attentions, and soon asked her hand. He was rich, educated, accomplished; but she declined the offer. He was a brilliant lover, but had not the sterling qualities required for a good husband; and this she had the common sense to see.

In the plain, unpolished Doctor Arlington, she saw more to really love than in any of the showy young men it had been her fortune to meet in the city. Accomplished herself thoroughly, the doctor's utter want of external ease and grace always

slightly annoyed her, especially when others were present to see it. She would look at him sometimes, and wish, involuntarily, that either nature or art had done something more for him. There was good in him, but it needed true expression to let it be seen in its own excellence. When they were alone, she did not see so much of this. Then she attended only to his conversation, which was always interesting; for his mind was well stored, and his eye saw, and his heart felt the beauty and sentiment of nature. But when she met him in the company of others, especially with young men or women of really polished exteriors, his awkwardness, his shyness, and his embarrassment annoyed her. The reason of this she did not know: at least, it had never come into conscious thought; the reader will not, perhaps, deem himself quite so ignorant on the subject.

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CHAPTER IV.

A DECLARATION.

"It was too lovely a day to remain cooped up in the city," said Whitney, after he had joined Emily and Flora, "and so I mounted Bucyrus and gave him the reins. The sagacious animal set out direct for Rose Hill, and here I am, thanks to the noble beast! I hope I am welcome?"

"Yes, right welcome," returned Flora, smiling. "Bucyrus is certainly a very sensible fellow."

"That he is. After this evidence of it, I shall consider him worth his weight in gold. He could not have done better if he had known my very thoughts."

"Perhaps he did."

"Perhaps so, indeed. Horses have minds; that is one of my doctrines."

"And, no doubt, was able to read your wishes in your face."

Exactly."

Or," remarked Emily, "in your fingers. It is wonderful how, almost unconsciously, our hands do the will of our minds."

"Yes—yes, Emily is right," said Flora. "The whole case is clear. You gave Bucyrus the rein, it is true, but you kept it in your hand, in order to check him, should he start from sudden alarm. Your thoughts were on Rose Hill, and without your knowing it, those thoughts flowed down into

your fingers, and they contracted on the reins involuntarily."

"Yes—yes, that explains the whole thing. I now understand the matter perfectly!" the young man said, with mock gravity. "It is wonderful, is it not?" Then changing his tone and manner, he added, glancing around as he spoke,

"This is truly a lovely spot. A sylvan scene, and you the nymphs of the place. 'God made the country, and man made the town,' is often said, by way of indicating the country's superior loveliness. I never saw much force in the saying until now. The city gives us nothing like this. We have red, and yellow, and brown, and orange—yea, even all the colours of the rainbow, on house and roof, on dome and spire; but nothing like that magnificent wood in its autumn robes. The seasons change, and we hardly know it, except by the heat or cold of the atmosphere; nothing of this is there—nothing of this deep quiet—nothing of this pulsating stillness. The breeze awakens, but we see not its motions among the leafy boughs; we hear not the song of birds, nor see the bright waters of the gliding stream."

"You could love the country, then?" Flora remarked.

"Yes, for a time, at least; but, after all, the city has its attractions; and for me, I think, more permanent ones than the country can afford. There is reality in the city, and we can't get along without realities. In the country our delights are too pure and poetical. As, for instance—let me give you some fine ideas on this subject from an American poet:

‘ Seek ye the solemn wood,
Whose giant trunks a verdant roof uprear,
And listen, while the roar of some far flood
Thrills the young leaves with fear !

‘ Stand by the tranquil lake,
Sleeping mid willowy banks of emerald dye,
Save when the wild bird’s wing its surface break,
Checkering the mirror’d sky ;

‘ And if within your breast,
Hallow’d to Nature’s touch one chord remain,
If aught save worldly honours find you bless’d,
Or hope of sordid gain :

‘ A strange delight shall thrill,
A quiet joy brood o’er you like a dove ;
Earth’s placid beauty shall your bosom fill,
Stirring its depths with love.

‘ Oh, in the calm, still hours—
The holy Sabbath hours, when sleeps the air,
And heaven and earth, deck’d with her beauteous flowers,
Lie hushed in breathless prayer--

‘ Pass ye the proud fane by,
The vaulted aisles, by flaunting folly trod,
And, ’neath the temple of the uplifted sky,
Go forth, and worship God !’

“ There is the poetry ; but this don’t always do for us. We can’t always remain suspended far up on the wings of imagination. We have to walk upon the earth for the most of our time.”

Flora and her young friend listened to all this, yet affected by it differently ; the former with admiration of some of the sentiments uttered, the latter with admiration for him who uttered them. In varied conversation an hour passed, and then the little party returned to the cottage, Emily leaning upon the arm of Whitney, and listening to his words with a heart trembling in the fulness of its own delight. He was a man well calculated to win the admiration of one who could not look far below the surface. The exterior graces of his mind were many, and varied in their attractions. He conversed well in French, and was familiar

with the German language and German literature. He had a taste for music, and had cultivated that taste a good deal. He sang with much grace and feeling. In external accomplishments he was a perfect gentleman; but he had no fixed aims in life. Like the butterfly, he flitted from flower to flower, sipping honey; but, unlike the bee, he laid not up a store for future use. As to principles, he had none that were fixed upon a sound, rational basis. But this a woman like Emily had not the perception to discover. Herself governed more by impulse than reason, she could not estimate another by a higher standard than was in her own mind. Still she was a woman in heart; she could love like a woman, tenderly, deeply, devotedly. In her bosom were treasures of affection, garnered up like hidden waters in the rock. It required only a touch to bring them forth, but when once revealed to the light, the fountain must gush unceasingly, whether the bright waters flowed peacefully on, blessing and blessed, or were wasted where they fell. Ah! little does fond woman dream, when, in the lovely springtime of life, with everything around her as beautiful, as innocent as her own thoughts, she gives up all her hopes and all her heart to one she loves, that so many pure drops from the outbursting stream of affection will fall upon the arid ground, as in after years she sadly finds have thus fallen and sunk forever fruitless. No man, as men now are, is able fully to meet and reciprocate a true woman's love. The best, with all their willingness, with all their efforts, fail. There are deep places of the heart unreached—aching voids unfilled. And yet it is wonderful how small a return will seem to

satisfy a woman, and make her breast glow with sunlight. A pleasant word, a tender look, a kiss of love—ah! these seem but small returns for the deep tenderness that ever burns in her bosom; and yet, alas! too often even these are withheld; and the selfish, reserved, cold, and at times morose “lord of creation,” comes in and goes out daily, never dreaming that by this very coldness, reserve, and moroseness, he is breaking the heart of her who loves him better than her own life! But it is ever so. Hundreds, thousands, yea, tens of thousands, are performing hourly and daily their round of duties, unblessed by smiles that warm the bosom, or words that make the heart tremble with interior joy, while, all unconscious of their cruel indifference, they who provide fine houses, fine furniture, and fine garments for their victims, proudly imagine that they are the best of husbands.

Maiden—innocent, loving maiden!—do not turn away from this picture now, or else the time may come when you will seek to turn from it, and shall not be able. When one comes asking your love, know well if he be worthy of such love as you can give. Look not alone at his attractive exterior; seek to know what ends actuate him. It is the loveliness of pure, high principles that remains verdant longest—yea, forever verdant. These, and these alone, can make you permanently happy. Without them, an angel’s grace, an angel’s form would lose its attractions; with them, the plainest exterior soon grows beautiful to the eye of a loving wife. Lay this up in your heart; think of it in the morning, and when your head presses at night your pillow. It may save you from a woman’s

hardest lot—that of being bound for life to a man who does not even *try* to make her happy.

During the day, Flora, who saw that Whitney was inclined to say things intended only for Emily's ear, managed to leave her young friend and her lover alone, frequently for an hour and more at a time. These opportunities were improved by the young man. He had made up his mind to ask of Emily her hand in marriage, which he did during one of their walks. He was tremblingly and blushingly referred, as a matter of course, to her parents.

In the afternoon, Doctor Arlington came over to Rose Hill again, and spent a couple of hours. His awkwardness and plainness of exterior were never more annoyingly apparent to Flora than they were on this occasion, being contrasted with the polished manners and elegant person of Charles Whitney. The latter conversed fluently on a great variety of subjects, while the former said but little, and that seemingly not to the point, until a sentiment was dropped by Whitney that the doctor's conscience would not let him pass without correcting. He did so at first by merely objecting to it with mildness; this brought upon him quite an avalanche of sentences, uttered with great ease and in well-chosen language. His reply was brief, but much to the point, and given with more than his usual elegance of expression. Flora felt its force, and so did Whitney; but the latter rallied to the charge with a renewed flourish of words. On his ending his argument, Arlington, in a calm, collected, thoughtful voice, laid down certain positions bearing upon the subject, and from these demon-

strated, in a beautiful and lucid manner, the fallaciousness of all that Whitney had said, showing that he had taken mere appearances of truth for truth itself. So fully did he establish the point assumed, that the other had the good sense to drop the discussion. This little incident made the breast of Flora glow with pleasure. A veil had been lifted from off the exterior of both the young men, and she could see deeper beneath the surface, and estimate both by a more correct standard. Doctor Arlington seemed no longer awkward ; she listened with more attention to all he said, and perceived more in his words than she had ever before perceived. When he took her hand at parting, and held it in his longer than usual, looking her earnestly in the face as he did so, she felt her heart flutter and her cheek burn.

"We shall always be happy to see you at Rose Hill, doctor," she said, her voice changed a little from its usually calm tone.

The doctor bowed low, pressed her hand slightly, and departed. Emily had noticed this little interview from the window, and, with a maiden's intuition, understood just what it meant.

"The doctor's over head and ears in love with you, Flora," she said, laughing, as her friend came in.

Flora could not entirely conceal her blushes at this remark.

"I thought," the other resumed, "that he didn't come here so often, unprofessionally, without his eye being upon somebody. I was vain enough to suppose, at first, that I was the object of his regard ; but I see that I have been mistaken. He has been looking past me."

"The doctor is quite a character," remarked Whitney, laughing; "but it wouldn't be a perfect world if there were no characters in it. He has his good points, I suppose, as every one has, and makes, no doubt, a capital country doctor."

"I have met with city doctors, in my time," Flora said, "with double Arlington's pretensions, and not half his merit. A rich gem is sometimes concealed in a rude casket."

"Oh, very true," returned the young man; "Doctor Arlington is doubtless a gem of the very first water."

There was more in the manner than in the words that displeased Flora. The latter had not been spoken from a right spirit. She said no more, and the subject dropped. Towards evening Whitney mounted Bucyrus, and returned to the city. The maidens were again alone.

CHAPTER V.

A WEDDING.

"I AM the happiest creature alive !" Emily said to her young friend, as soon as Whitney had ridden out of sight, throwing her arms around Flora's neck and bursting into a flood of joyful tears.

Flora more than guessed the cause of this excitement of Emily's feelings, although she said, as she returned her embrace, tenderly,

"What has occurred to make you so happy ?"

"Can't you tell ?" asked Emily, looking into the other's face, with tears and smiles blending upon her own in rainbow beauty. "Whitney has opened up to me all his heart ; he loves me. Oh, what more than this could I ask in life !" and she hid her face in her friend's bosom, and sobbed for very joy.

Flora, while she had reason for supposing that such a dénouement would sooner or later take place, was yet startled by it, now that it had come upon her. She loved her young friend like a sister ; but she did not admire the character of Whitney ; she did not believe that he could make her happy. She had tried to speak out on this subject to Emily several times, in order to guard her against him ; but she could not make herself understood. Now the declaration had been made--now the die was nearly cast. She felt troubled,

and her face showed that Emily's communication had fallen as a shadow upon her mind.

"You do not rejoice with me at this happy result," her young friend at length said, lifting herself up from Flora's bosom, as soon as she felt the coldness with which her words had been received. "Why is this?"

"Have you accepted this offer of Mr. Whitney's hand?"

"Virtually, by referring him to my parents."

"But not in word. Then you are still uncommitted, fully. I am glad of that."

"Are you beside yourself, Flora! What do you mean by such strange words?"

"Frankly, then, as a true friend should speak, I do not think you will be permanently happy as the wife of Charles Whitney."

"Your reason?" briefly returned the maiden.

"I think, for one thing, that he loves himself too well ever to make a woman happy."

"Loves himself! How strangely you talk, Flora. No man could love himself less than he does; his generous feelings are proverbial."

"And yet, I never heard him speak kindly of any man in my life. He sees defects quickly; but good points in character do not seem to meet his eye."

"You certainly must be thinking of some one else."

"No; I was several times in his company last winter, and observed him closely. He was lavish even to flattery in his praises of our sex, but censorious in regard to his own. This is never a good sign. But that is not all. I am satisfied that

all his best points are on the surface, and easily seen. His mind does not seem to rest upon a good basis. He has personal and intellectual beauty ; but what do you know of his moral qualities ? High moral excellence does not shine out in every act, word, and tone, as they should beam forth, were they within ; and without *moral* worth, no man can make a right-minded woman happy. This too many have found to their sorrow when it was too late. His constant habit, too, of complimenting—flattering, I should say—our sex, does not look well. No one flatters another who does not expect to gain some favour of which he is really unworthy. True worth—true merit—disdains all art ; it is its own all-sufficient advocate.”

Flora ceased, while her friend looked at her in silent astonishment.

“ What I have said,” she resumed, her earnest manner changing into one more quiet and subdued, “ affects you, I see, with surprise. I wish it were not so. I wish your mind could view this whole subject more calmly. You cannot be happy as a married woman unless you love your husband with a deep, true, and permanent love, nor unless he, in turn, loves you with a like devotion ?”

“ Of course not ! That is self-evident.”

“ Yes, it is self-evident to every woman’s heart. Now tell me why you love Mr. Whitney.”

“ I love him because he is worthy of my love ; for what other reason could I love him ?”

“ In what consists this worthiness ?” pursued Flora.

“ He is high-minded, noble, intelligent,” returned the blushing maiden, proudly.

"What do you mean by high-minded and noble?"

"He is above a low action," was replied, after a slight pause.

"Ah, my dear friend," Flora said, with affectionate earnestness, "I fear that in your mind there is no well-defined appreciation of his character—no whole view of it, that is the result of a distinct knowledge of the various qualities that make up his intellect and affections; and without such knowledge of a man's character, no experiment can be more hazardous than for a woman to enter the marriage relation. In the matter of wedlock, a maiden should unite the serpent's wisdom with the harmlessness and innocence of the dove. It is impossible to know a man too thoroughly."

"I am not suspicious. A woman's heart, like the magnetic needle, points to its true pole. Reason is no guide in love," was the reply of Emily. "I cannot look into the mind of him who tells me that he loves me truly, and see all that is there. I can only question my own heart, and be guided by its answers. This I have done; and it responds joyfully to his words of tenderness."

"Have you never," said Flora, "let your mind rise into an abstract state, wherein you could imagine future circumstances and future feelings so perfectly as to make them, for a time, present?"

"Yes, often."

"Then so abstract your mind now. Think of the time when beauty shall fade—when all external attractions shall lose their power, and see if you have a distinct perception of qualities in the mind of Mr. Whitney, that will still hold your

heart to him with even a firmer love than you had before experienced. If this be so, accept his offer ; if not, beware how you sacrifice your heart upon that shrine."

But Emily could not really understand her friend — could not so abstract her mind. Her eyes were dazzled by the brilliant qualities of her suitor, and her heart trembling under the first strong impulses of awakened love. Much more passed between the friends ; but enough has been given to show their different characters and different views. On the next day, Emily, who had intended to pass a week or two more in the country, left for New-York. Whitney's declaration of love had stripped Rose Hill of its attractions. After her departure, Doctor Arlington continued his visits regularly, but without losing much of his awkward reserve in the presence of Flora, who, however, managed, usually, to carry on a conversation with him, that always grew more and more interesting as it progressed, and the doctor so far forgot himself as to let his thoughts act freely and naturally. Sometimes she would really admire the beauty, order, and strength of his mind ; and at other times have her own sense of the chaste and elegant in manner sadly offended. Thus time wore on, until towards Christmas, when Flora, after repeated urgent invitations from Emily, who had soon after her return to the city accepted Mr. Whitney's offer, left Rose Hill to spend a part of the winter in New-York. Doctor Arlington was at the cottage to bid her farewell. He slightly pressed her hand, or, at least, Flora thought so, as he shook it ; and his voice trembled a little as he said " Good-by ;" if

not, Flora's quick ear deceived her. He had never before appeared to better advantage in her eyes. She could not help glancing back frequently from the coach window, nor help feeling an emotion of strange delight, as she observed him standing in the porch of her mother's cottage, gazing after the vehicle that was bearing her away from Rose Hill.

In the city she found much to absorb her attention. Emily's marriage was to take place in February, and this afforded a topic of constant interest, especially to Emily herself, and through her to Flora. Then there was a succession of brilliant parties, with the opera, to keep up a pleasing excitement. It is no matter of great wonder that Flora's mind should not very often turn towards Rose Hill with a strong affection, except on account of her mother. If she thought of the plain country doctor at all, it was with no particular interest. His unattractive exterior appeared in her mind more unattractive still as contrasted with the polished elegance of city beaux, who thronged every drawing-room, and lavished upon herself and others the most assiduous attentions.

Among these was a young man, a member of the New-York bar, named Allison, who was really pleased with Flora. He was a personal and intimate friend of Charles Whitney, and had been chosen by him to act as one of the groomsmen at the approaching marriage ceremony. Flora was to act as bridesmaid to her friend Emily. All this was understood for many weeks before the wedding, which made the intercourse between the parties thus related more familiar than other cir-

cumstances would have warranted. The consequence was, that Allison had an opportunity not only of meeting Flora frequently, and without reserve, but of seeing her more in her real character than any woman is seen in society. The more intimately he knew her, the more highly did he esteem—it might be said, love her.

Nor was Flora altogether indifferent to the attractions presented by the young attorney. Almost unconsciously to herself, her thoughts would turn towards him when he was away, and her heart quicken its pulsations the moment he came into her presence. His invitations to attend the opera were never declined, nor was the offer of his hand for a cotillon ever felt as obtrusive. Thus the days wore on, until winter drew towards its close, when the time came for the celebration of the marriage rites between Whitney and Emily. These passed, and also the attendant festivities, involving a series of brilliant parties, in which Flora and Allison attracted much attention, and caused many whispered allusions to the possible result of their intimacy. To the former, no winter had passed so pleasantly ; why, she did not venture to ask herself. The latter understood his own feelings much better ; he had decided to offer Flora his hand. In this he was warmly encouraged by Whitney, who gave him the assurance that there was not a shadow of doubt as to the success of his suit, promising, at the same time, to get his young bride to sound her friend on the subject, so as to make assurance doubly sure. This delicate task Emily readily undertook. She was alone with Flora one day, about two weeks after

her marriage. The topic of conversation turned upon the bride's happy state of mind, and this naturally enough opened the way for her to express a wish to see her friend speedily enter the marriage relation.

"I'm in no hurry," Flora returned, laughing, while the colour on her cheek heightened; "and, besides, I don't think I have yet seen the man into whose keeping I would be willing to trust my happiness."

"I think I know of some who would be very willing to trust their happiness into your keeping," was the smiling reply.

"Indeed! I've been making some conquests, then? I ought to feel flattered, really!" Although this was said gayly, there was something forced about her manner—an effort to seem indifferent.

"I know many a girl who would feel flattered, had she made the impression you have made—at least upon one heart that has, till now, been thought invulnerable."

"And pray what heart is that?"

Emily affected to seem embarrassed by this question. She was silent for an instant, and then said,

"Perhaps I have gone a little too far. A young wife must be careful how she betrays secrets learned from her husband."

A remark like this had a very natural effect upon Flora—that of exciting her curiosity. This was shown in her face, not by words.

"You would give a little finger to know whose heart you have broken!" Emily laughingly said, as soon as she read Flora's thoughts in her countenance.

"No, not a little finger quite," returned the friend, smiling.

"But what would you give to know?"

"Nothing."

"Then I'll tell you for nothing;" and bending over to the ear of her friend, Emily whispered the name of Allison. Flora started, coloured, and looked confused.

"Ah, ha! I thought my calm, cold friend could not withstand his attractions!" almost screamed Emily, in a transport of delight at perceiving these evidences of Allison's successful inroads upon her heart, at the same time throwing her arms around Flora's neck, and kissing her cheek with real affection.

Much to her own surprise, Flora found that this intelligence, meeting her ear so unexpectedly, caused a glow of delight to fill her whole bosom. 'Why is this?' she resolutely asked herself, arousing her mind up at once. The pleasure Emily's communication had given, betrayed both to herself and the fond young bride, was changed, as soon as she could begin to think, into seriousness.

"What you say," she remarked, with a sober face, as soon as she could control herself, "surprises me, and throws my mind into confusion. But perhaps you are only jesting?"

"Oh no, that I am not!" Emily said, still with animation. "Mr. Allison has stated to Charles freely the decided preference he has for you, a preference that I have seen all along. He is just the one for you. Charles says he doesn't know a better match among all his acquaintances; and

they are such intimate friends, too ! Just as intimate as you and I are. Won't it be delightful !”

“ Won't what be delightful ?” Flora inquired in a grave tone.

Emily was thrown aback by the manner in which this question was asked. A silence of nearly a minute followed, during which both Flora and her friend felt much embarrassed. At length the former said, in a firm voice,

“ Emily, I shall leave for Rose Hill to-morrow.”

“ Oh no, no ! You must not think of such a thing for a moment !”

“ Nothing could induce me to stay here for a day longer,” was Flora's resolute reply. Then rising, she asked to be permitted to retire to her own room, as she wished to be alone for a short time. Emily offered no objection, and she left the apartment.

CHAPTER VI

A MAN OF THE WORLD.

IT was some time after Flora entered her own room before her mind became sufficiently composed, and her thoughts calm enough to enable her to ascertain the true nature of her own feelings. As soon as she could read her heart with anything like an accurate perception of its true state, she found that she had been far too well pleased with Mr. Allison's attentions.

"Who and what is he?" was a question that she put to herself with unflinching resolution. The answer was not entirely satisfactory. He was a young man of education—his tastes had been well cultivated—his exterior was attractive. But of his moral qualities she could not speak from any certain knowledge. Her heart plead for him; but reason was not satisfied, and reason's voice confirmed her first perception of a right course, which was to return at once to Rose Hill, and there, entirely removed from his society, and from the half-bewildering excitement of a city life passed amid a round of festivities, weigh the whole subject dispassionately. In her mother's judgment she had the highest confidence, and on this judgment she determined to repose if Allison pressed his suit, as Emily's words led her to believe that he would.

As she had declared, so she acted. On the evening of the next day she was with her mother at

Rose Hill. On the same evening Allison called in to see her at the newly-arranged dwelling of Charles Whitney and his young wife. The former sat alone in one of their handsome parlours.

"Ah, good-evening, good-evening, Allison!" said Whitney, taking his friend's hand: "you are just too late; the bird has flown."

"How?"

"Flora is at Rose Hill long before this."

"At Rose Hill!" said Allison, with surprise and chagrin. "What is the meaning of this?"

"Emily hinted to her that you felt something like a preference for her, and she fluttered off in instant alarm!"

"George! but that is a good sign; don't you think so?"

"I don't know—perhaps it is; but Flora is an odd creature, and apt to get crotchets into her head; and, what is worse, these crotchets are too apt to stick there."

"What is your opinion about the matter as it now stands? Or, what is your wife's opinion? that is worth a dozen of yours."

"My own opinion is, that it's a little ruse—an attempt to play shy, to see if you think her worth taking some trouble to secure. I have always thought her as proud as Lucifer himself; and with a little something hanging to one corner of her heart, shaped like an icicle."

"But your wife's opinion? I wouldn't give a snap for yours when hers is to be had. What does she think?"

"She? Why, she thinks you can win Flora easily enough if you will follow her up."

"She does?"

"Yes; that's her opinion."

"And mine too; but plague take the girl! there was no use in her flying off at a tangent. I don't see any sense in that."

"He that wins Flora Elton must woo her; don't you say so, Emily?"

The young wife entered at this moment.

"Say what?" asked Emily, after she had briefly greeted Allison.

"That whoever wins Flora must woo her?"

"Certainly. No maiden is won before she is wooed."

"How in the world came you to let your friend run away in such a hurry?" Allison now said, smiling, and in a less concerned voice.

"Oh, as to that," was the reply, "Flora is a resolute little body, and when she makes up her mind to do a thing, all the world couldn't stop her. She took it into her head all at once that she would go back to Rose Hill. I coaxed, and persuaded, and scolded, but it was all to no purpose. Home she had determined to go, and home she went."

"Rose Hill? How far is that from the city?"

"About five miles."

"In New-Jersey?"

"Yes."

"I must call on her, then, at Rose Hill, I suppose. Do you think I would be welcome?"

"Oh yes. Everybody receives a warm welcome at Rose Hill. But there is a rival there!" Emily laughed as she said this.

"Indeed!" ejaculated Allison, looking half alarmed. "A formidable one?"

"That I can hardly tell. You never know exactly how to take Flora. If it was any other girl, I should hardly think a booby of a country doctor to be feared as a rival, where you came into the field."

"Thank you for your compliment! But who or what is this booby of a country doctor, as you call him?"

"He is just what I have called him. The term 'booby' expresses the idea capitally; but if you wish me to be more explicit, I will say, that of all the awkward, ungainly, boorish-looking fellows that I have met in civilized society, Doctor Arlington bears off the palm."

"And he, you think, is a rival?"

"I can hardly believe so; but still, it is true that Flora would never let me laugh at him without bestowing on me a lecture for my pains."

"Does he visit her regularly?"

"As clockwork."

"With serious intentions?"

"No doubt in the world of it; but, of course, he cannot stand a moment's chance if you seriously contend for her favour."

"That I intend doing in right good earnest."

"I hope you will. I should never get over it in the world if she were to throw herself away upon such a fellow as that Arlington. She is too lovely a girl to be sacrificed thus. But if *you* address her, I have no doubt of your success. My word for it, a lovelier one than she—lovely in mind especially—is not numbered among either your acquaintances or mine."

"So I think," returned Allison. "From the

first she interested me. A more intimate acquaintance has only made apparent new features of loveliness, that are more attractive than those at first seen."

"And the longer and more intimately you know her, the more she will charm you. Flora is one who wears well. Her best points are not at first seen—are not, it seems to me, ever all seen. Each recurring day shows something new to admire."

This only had the effect to stimulate Allison in the pursuit of Flora. He, as may have been seen, was indulging for her more than a mere passing preference. As has been already stated, he was a young attorney, in practice at the New-York bar. His family was reputable and wealthy, and he an only son. Great expense had been lavished upon his education by his father, who felt ambitious that his son should become distinguished in some way: The young man promised well—that is, promised to become eminent as a man of talents. Inheriting from his father a love of distinction, he was stimulated to application and activity in his profession, by the hope of one day occupying in the eye of his country a high position. Already he was beginning to rise above the struggling, but less gifted mass of young attorneys—already he had been alluded to in warm terms of commendation by some of the newspapers. These indications of success flattered his vanity, quickened the energies of his mind, and confirmed him in his already well-formed resolution to stand high in the estimation of his countrymen—not as a benefactor, but as a man of distinguishing talents

Like that of the great mass, his ambition regarded his own glory, not his country's good, and therein lay his danger. A genuine love of country will sustain a man, no matter how high his elevation, as it sustained the great and good Washington, amid the strongest trials; but mere self-love, after it has carried a man up to a pinnacle of the temple of fame, will, like another Satan, tempt him to cast himself down headlong, and too often, alas! with success; but no promised angels bear him up; he is dashed in pieces by the fall.

The end which Allison set before him being his own elevation, for the sake of the honour that would become his due, he regarded all the means to the attainment of that end which could be used as perfectly legitimate. It made no difference to him whether a cause that came into his hands was clearly just or clearly unjust. Indeed, the worse the cause, the more willing was he often to undertake it; for then he had the chance of displaying the force of his talents, and, by that mere force, turning even the course of justice aside. To gain a just cause was not, in his estimation, half so creditable as to gain a bad one. In the former, he had in his favour the court's common sense of justice; but, in the latter, he had to put down by sophistical reasonings that common sense of justice, or so obscure it that it could no longer clearly discriminate the right from the wrong. Nor had he much clearer perceptions in regard to his duties in ordinary society; or, to speak more correctly, as a man acting out of the sphere of his regular calling. The gratification of something in himself was always a governing end. Thus, in the prefer-

ence he felt for Flora, there was no thought of mutual happiness—no careful scanning of his ruling loves and hers, to see if there could be that true unity between them, whose natural products is mutual happiness. What really captivated him was her strong, discriminating mind, which had been well educated. He looked confidently to a high position in society, and he wanted a wife who could do her husband credit as an intellectual and accomplished woman. Flora, he soon perceived, was fit to shine, and that with lustre, place her as high as he could; and this was his leading inducement in determining to secure her hand. Those who have true ideas in regard to marriage can readily determine how far such an end, as the leading one, could produce happiness between two partners.

CHAPTER VII.

FLORA'S TWO SUITERS.

ON the evening after Flora's return to Rose Hill, Doctor Arlington called over to see her. Never had he before appeared in her eyes to less advantage. The plainness of his exterior seemed plainer than ever; his manners more awkward; his speech less elegant. She felt embarrassed while he stayed, and conversed with less freedom and interest than she had ever done before. His departure was felt as a great relief.

To her mother she had not yet confided the real cause of her sudden return from the city. She hardly knew how to do so. Mr. Allison had not made overtures to her; nor was there about Emily's communication a definiteness that could be relied upon. Half regretting her hasty return, she retired early to bed, but not to sleep. For hours she lay awake, deeply pondering the new position in which she found herself. The longer she thought—thinking, as she did, too fully from her predominant feelings, and not above them—the more was she inclined to favour the advances of the young attorney. His personal accomplishments, which were of a high order, claimed her fullest admiration; and, like too many, she suffered herself to fall into just the error she had not many months before condemned in her friend Emily, that of inferring from a fair exterior the existence of

true principles. When she at last fell away into sleep, it was with the image of Allison pictured pleasantly upon her mind, where it still lingered through the night-watches, the presiding genius of sweet dreams.

In the morning she felt less inclined than ever to open her heart to her mother, for fear that her colder mind might quickly find reasons for a prudent suspension of favourable impressions, until the character of the young man were more fully known. 'This her own judgment told her, as it had told her at first, was the only safe course, and this course she intended to pursue ; but she was afraid that her mother would endeavour to make her pursue it too rigidly, and, therefore, felt as if she would rather not yet open up her whole mind. 'That day passed, and the next morning came. Soon after breakfast a letter from Emily was brought to her. She retired to her own room, and there broke the seal. It read thus :

“MY DEAR FLORA—Everybody is asking why you have left for Rose Hill so suddenly. What shall I say? What can I say? I know the true reason ; but it will not do to tell that. Allison is surprised and troubled. He intends riding over to see you ; but hadn't you better return? He is serious in the regard he feels for you, and, I think, is eminently worthy of your hand. But this you will have to decide for yourself ; and, in doing so, you ought to have the very best opportunities for forming a correct judgment. This you cannot do if you remain where you are, and see him only occasionally. If he is in all things such as your

heart can approve, you ought to know it; and if not, it is just as necessary for you to know the truth, that you may decide for yourself from clear rational convictions. I wish you could have seen how disappointed he was when we told him that you had gone home. He did not hesitate to say that you had interested him more than any one he had ever seen, and that the loss of your society would be felt as no ordinary privation. The fact is, dear, you have fully made a conquest of him; he is yours if you will take him; and if you do not, I shall think you the strangest girl I have ever known. Won't you come back to the city? Do, just for my sake. I can't tell how much I miss you. Nothing seems to me as it did. Write me immediately, and say when we shall see you, or bring an answer to this yourself. Ever your friend,

EMILY."

Flora read over this letter twice before she fully understood it. The first reading threw her mind into confusion. It was only after the second perusal that she could compose her thoughts. But even after thinking for an hour, with a mind tolerably clear, she was unable to determine how she ought to act. To return to New-York, after having left it as she did, presented itself to her as unmaidenly; her delicacy of feeling shrunk from it; it would be like courting the attentions of Mr. Allison; but her inclination to do so was active, and furnished its reasons, which were strongly urged. At length she sat herself down to reply to Emily's letter. Among other things, she said,

"I do not think I shall go back to New-York

for at least some weeks. I want time for reflection. I cannot conceal from myself that Mr. Allison has made more than a mere favourable impression upon me. This is, of course, for your own ear alone. This confession you must keep even from your husband. A wife may hold sacred the heart-secrets of her maiden friends, without any violation of mutual confidence. Perhaps, after the time I have mentioned has elapsed, I may return to you again; but I am unable now to speak with certainty. In the mean time, I want my mind to remain as calm and clear as possible. I want to know truly the nature of my own feelings."

Emily did not deem the concealment of her friend's secret from her husband a very sacred obligation, and he was in no way scrupulous about informing Allison of the admission made in his favour. The latter had changed his mind about going immediately to Rose Hill, it having been determined that Emily should first write, and thus a knowledge of Flora's real sentiments be obtained. This knowledge being now in his possession, Allison could determine for himself how to act. Instead of adopting an open, manly course, and visiting Flora at Rose Hill without any disguise, he spent several days in studying the best method of approaching her. During this time he had frequent interviews with the husband of Emily, and with Emily herself.

"If I visit her at Rose Hill immediately," he said to the latter, while he was now yet undetermined how to act, "I may seem to her too anxious to press my suit; or, were I to do so, her delicacy of feeling might prevent her returning to the city

as then the appearance would be that she did so in order to meet me more frequently. Besides, if I seem indifferent towards her, the thought of this indifference may act as a foil to the preference she has confessed, and make it much more distinct in her own mind. What do you think ?”

Emily’s thoughts were not decided on the subject, and she could not, therefore, advise.

“I believe I had better hold off a while, at all events,” was the conclusion of Allison. “In the mean time, do you keep up a constant correspondence with her; and, above all things, try and get her back to the city.”

“Trust me for that. Perhaps you are right in deciding not to visit her in the country. Her mind is delicate. To do so might cause her to remain there, for fear her coming to the city might be thought to be for the purpose of throwing herself into your company.”

Tact, not an open, high-minded course of action, was finally resolved upon. It proved successful. Emily soon ceased to speak of Allison in her almost daily letters to her friend, but never omitted to urge strenuously her return to the city, for a few weeks at least, if no more. The solicitations of her friend, strongly seconded by her own inclinations, prevailed. Flora went back to New-York in about ten days after her sudden withdrawal from gay city life. During the time of her stay in the country, Doctor Arlington visited her several times, but soon perceived a change in her. She was not so kind a friend, nor, to him, so agreeable a companion as she had formerly been. This he naturally attributed to the influence upon her mind of

the winning allurements of society in a city like New-York. To city scenes, a quiet country life and quiet country friends contrasted too strongly. They could not satisfy a mind which the former had filled with delight.

The change in Flora's manner was sensibly felt by Arlington, who had for her a well-based affection ; for it was grounded in a thorough appreciation of her moral and intellectual qualities. Nothing had been said to him by Flora of her intended return to New-York, although he visited her on the evening previous to her departure. On the day subsequent to that on which she left, the doctor again called in at Rose Hill. His manifestation of surprise on learning that Flora was in New-York, gave the mother a more accurate knowledge of his feelings than she had before possessed. She was not displeased at this, for she knew him well, and understood his real worth. The reason of her daughter's return was, she supposed, the urgent solicitations of the young bride, from whom a letter had come almost every day. Of the real cause she had no suspicion. A whisper of that would have awakened great concern.

Arlington really loved Flora ; but it was, with him, no suddenly-inspired sentiment. For a year and more he had looked at her attentively, and marked the unfolding beauties of her mind. Her strong good sense, her quick appreciation of the beautiful in external nature, her love of truth, her entire freedom from maidenly arts and affectations, had for him a charm, and gave to their possessor the uppermost place in his affections. From admiration of these qualities in her mind, the transi-

tion to love of her person for their sakes was easy and natural. But Arlington, at the same time that he could duly appreciate and ardently love a being like Flora Elton, was towards the whole sex, for whom he had a profound regard, amounting almost to admiration, timid and bashful. He never came into their presence that his mind did not lose its calm, even, philosophic tone. This rendered him awkward and very uninteresting; and, as the reader has seen in the case of Emily, subjected him often to ridicule: though it is but justice to say that Emily's description of him, when she chose to allude to his manners and appearance, were exaggerations.

The sudden and unannounced return of Flora to New-York caused Doctor Arlington much pain of mind. He very naturally came to the true conclusion, strengthened by the indifference of her manner towards him, that her affections had been interested while in the city, and, influenced by these, she had gone back, to be near their object. As best he could, he solaced himself in this state of uncertainty, steadily discharging all the while the duties of his calling with unabated skill. No one saw that there was anything upon the mind of the quiet doctor, as, answering the calls upon him, he went from house to house, administering to the maladies which Providence had permitted to reach the bodies of his patients; and no one received fewer attentions, or had medicinal prescriptions of a less accurate nature, because the mind of the physician was not so tranquil as before. The reason was, because Doctor Arlington was governed in all the relations of life by strictly conscientious

principles. No pain of mind that he might suffer could make him neglect his duty. That was his fellow-man's inalienable right, and he never withheld it; to have done so would have been a crime of equal magnitude with theft—would, in fact, have been theft, in intention and effect. In such a discharge of duty, there was a compensating effect. In it, he found much to soften the pain which, when not thus engaged, he naturally felt.

As for Flora, she met Mr. Allison, on her return to New-York, with shrinking modesty, and yet with a heart-warm glow of pleasure. She knew that he loved her; for that had been declared to Emily, and, as the reader knows, at once communicated by that too officious friend. His appearance, manners, tones, sentiments, all had for Flora new charms; she looked upon him with new eyes; her naturally cautious, discriminating character—her disposition to look at qualities rather than appearances—no longer existed, or, at least, only in a passive state. He seemed, in her eyes, perfection. But why? That question had not yet been seriously asked.

Every evening found him by her side, either in the quiet parlours of Mr. and Mrs. Whitney, or in public assemblies, prosecuting his suit with tact and caution. He endeavoured to avoid awakening her clear judgment by too direct advances, preferring to throw over her heart toil after toil, until he should be sure of a conquest when the time came to push at once for victory. Within the charmed sphere that Allison had thus thrown around her, Flora's strong mind lay almost passive, suffering her heart to rule all her conduct. That she was

deeply interested in him, she did not attempt to conceal from herself; nor was she unconscious of the willingness she felt to accept his hand, if he should offer himself.

The present position of our characters will enable us now to introduce one or two more actors, whose influence upon subsequent incidents is important. This will be done in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN EVIL DEED.

THERE dwelt in a quiet, retired way in New-York, a widow, Mrs. Harper by name, her only child a daughter fourteen years of age. Their means of subsistence was the rent of two houses, that gave them an annual income of one thousand dollars a year. A house adjoining these two was also owned by Mrs. Harper; in this they lived. While Mrs. Elton resided in New-York, she had been on terms of close intimacy with this lady. The daughter of the latter and Flora had likewise been fast friends. During her stay in the city, she visited Anne Harper and her mother very frequently, and often spent with them many days at a time.

On calling in, one morning, about a week after her return to New-York, she found Mrs. Harper and Anne in evident trouble of mind. Her intimacy warranted inquiries as to the cause, which were made at once, when she received for answer,

that a technical defect in the title by which the little all they possessed in the world was held had been discovered, and that a suit had been brought against them in order to test the validity of their claim to the property. This suit Mrs. Harper had all along believed would not be prosecuted ; but she had just learned that it would come before the court in a few days, and that, as one of the most subtle young lawyers at the bar had been well feed to press it vigorously, there was great danger of her losing every dollar she had in the world.

This intelligence caused Flora much distress of mind. Deeply and tenderly did she sympathize with her old friends in the danger that threatened them. From all she could learn from Mrs. Harper, it was plainly apparent that a great wrong was intended her. The title deeds which she possessed set forth, that when her husband had paid to the father of the prosecutor certain sums of money, the full value of the property, that he would come into undisputed possession of the same. The receipts for these sums of money Mrs. Harper could exhibit ; and yet, in the final release of the property, which had remained under mortgage until the whole of the purchase money was paid, there was an informality which legally vitiated the title. The son of the original owner of the property, a man known throughout New-York as a heartless oppressor, wherever oppression would bring him the god he worshipped—gold—had, by some accident, discovered the flaw in Mrs. Harper's title to property which had greatly increased in value since it had passed from his father's hands. The knowl-

edge of this fact was followed by the instant determination to make a resolute effort to gain possession of the widow's three houses. For some time he weighed in his own mind the relative merits of two attorneys, as fitted, both in disposition and ability, to undertake such a cause. There were men at the bar in New-York to whom he would no more have thought of offering the case than of asking them to share in the results of a premeditated robbery; but he had come in contact with others whom he knew better. One of these was Allison, and to him he finally determined to apply. Accordingly, some months before the period to which the reader's attention has been fixed, he called upon the shrewd young lawyer, and laid the matter before him, in the shape of copies of all the legal documents relating thereto. Allison saw at a glance that the case would be a hard one to manage; that, in fact, Hartzog, the individual who sought his services, had not a shadow of equitable right to the property; but the very difficulties that the case presented stimulated him to undertake it. After he had thoroughly understood its merits, he said,

"I don't think your chance is a very good one, Mr. Hartzog."

"That is the reason of my application to you," was the prompt reply.

This flattered Allison's professional pride, and abated the small portion of disinclination to undertake the case that had been felt at the moment of its first presentation to his mind.

"Whoever gains this case, will have to do more than press the claims of justice; for they are, evi-

dently, in favour of the present owner of the property," he said to his client. "To prosecute a suit successfully, when your cause cannot be sustained by arguments founded in equity, is a difficult and delicate matter. The court is never disposed to lend much favour to mere points of law, and defects in legal instruments, where no fraud was perpetrated in the original transaction."

"I am well aware," returned Hartzog, "that it will require no ordinary degree of tact, talent, and perseverance to gain this suit. Therefore, as just said, I have chosen you to represent my claim. If successful, one of the houses shall be yours; or, if preferred, the value of it cash in hand."

"I agree to the terms," Allison replied; "and will, besides, pledge myself not to ask one dollar if the suit is lost."

To this Hartzog had no objection. All the papers were placed in the young lawyer's hands, and he set himself industriously to work upon the case. In due time a suit against the estate of the deceased Manville Harper was entered upon the docket, to be tried at the ensuing term of the court. Mrs. Harper employed skilful counsel to defend her title to the property left by her husband. Her legal representative had assured her, from the first, that her title was so clearly an equitable one, that there was no danger of its being set aside on account of the mere omission of a word or two in the release; but, as the trial approached, and her lawyer looked more closely into the matter, after having had several interviews with the opposing counsel, his views changed, and he saw, with real alarm, that in the subtlety of his opponent he had

much to fear. Nay, more, that the defects in the title were of such a nature as to be easily made to prove fraud on the part of Harper, although he had not the remotest idea that any such fraud had been committed. These fears he had honestly expressed to his client. The consequence was, great consternation in the minds of Mrs. Harper and her daughter, whose only means of support was the income derived from the property in question.

On the evening succeeding the day of her call upon Mrs. Harper, Flora met Mr. Allison again. The facts mentioned had greatly troubled her mind, and caused her to think more than usual of Allison, to whom she wished to mention the subject, under the vague hope that he could throw some light upon the dark picture. But, although it was on her tongue half a dozen times during the evening to allude to it, some new topic, introduced just at the moment, most inopportunately, would always prevent her from speaking of the thing nearest her heart. Much disappointed, Flora saw Allison depart, without having made to him the desired communication.

The deep interest felt by Flora in her friend absorbed almost every other thought. She went to them early on the next morning, and stayed throughout the day. The consternation that had seemed almost to paralyze the mind of Mrs. Harper on the day previous had subsided. She was now calmer, and more thoughtful. To the question of Flora, as to whether she had heard anything encouraging in regard to the suit, she replied,

“No, my child. The case stands, doubtless, as

our lawyer has represented it to us. But whether our little all be retained or pass away, we shall still remain in His hands who careth for the sparrows. I have thought a great deal about this matter since you were here yesterday. Then my mind was too much agitated ; I could not think calmly. My conclusion is, as it should have been at first, that, as in the moral government of Him who ruleth all things well, no mere gratuitous evil is permitted, this evil thing which has come to pass is for good. What I mean by evil is the effort made to do a great wrong. The suffering we have felt in anticipation of our loss, or what we may really suffer should the loss occur, I do not call by the name of evil—evil is sin, and appertains only to him who committeth sin. Sorrows, privations, distress, losses, are not evils : they are only blessings in disguise sent for our good. We are not perfect—we are not wholly good ; we therefore need something to agitate the stagnant surface of our minds. This trouble, I feel sure, has been permitted for this very end. It is thus that I am endeavouring to look at the whole subject ; and it is this view that causes me to feel calm, though serious. If we lose what we have of worldly goods, it will be a painful trial ; but should the loss come, I will strive not to murmur. I will see in it the hand of Him who doeth all things well.”

A state of mind so elevated did not excite Flora's wonder. Sentiments like those uttered by Mrs. Harper were familiar to her ears. Her mother's character was formed upon a like basis of profound trust in a Divine Providence that re

gards even the minutest particulars in the life of every individual.

"What you say," she replied, "I feel to be true. But it must be hard to rest in such a faith, when all is dark around and above."

"Not so hard as it may seem to those with whom all is sunshine," Mrs. Harper said. "Ah, my dear young friend! when the shadow falls upon our path, there is a sweet compensation in the full conviction that the sun is still shining brightly in the heavens. In such an hour, to the heart that will look up, there comes a trust and confidence that all things will work together for good. This is an all-sustaining assurance. This I now feel, and I can say, in truth, that it is more to me than all my fears."

From this state of reliance upon Providence the mind of Mrs. Harper relapsed in a few hours, when she became anxious and troubled. This continued for some time, until she again struggled to lift her eyes upward, and see the hand filled with blessings, that seemed only to hold the rod of correction. It was, at best, a hard trial; but it proved a salutary one, as are all the trials we are permitted to endure.

CHAPTER IX.

A DISCOVERY.

FLORA would have stayed all night with Mrs Harper and Anne but for the fact that she wished to get Mr. Allison's opinion of the case, which she hoped to do in the evening. She therefore left her friends and returned to Mrs. Whitney, with whom she stayed ; but, what was very unusual, Mr. Allison did not come. Most of the next day, which was the one preceding the trial, she spent at Mrs. Harper's. She found less composure in the minds of her friends than before. Still, they were struggling hard to be calm, and willing that all should be taken from them, if such were to be the result. Both Mrs. Harper and her daughter intended being present to hear the evidence brought forward against the validity of their title, and also to observe the progress of the trial.

As evening approached, Flora, anxious to see Mr. Allison, returned home, promising to call in again early in the morning and see them before they went to the courthouse. Shortly after tea, Mr. Allison dropped in at Mr. Whitney's.

"We didn't see you last evening," Emily said.

"No," replied Allison ; "an important suit that comes on to-morrow has occupied much of my attention for some days past. Matters appertaining to this snit kept me in my office until a late hour.

I have only now dropped in for a few minutes just to look at you."

"You will spend the evening, of course," Whitney said.

"No, that is impossible, and yet discharge my duty to my client. Business first, then pleasure."

"What suit is it?" asked Whitney.

"It is one of Hartzog's tough cases. I have managed two or three for him successfully; but this will put me, as the jockeys say, on my mettle."

"Hartzog's. The heartless old skin-flint! I wonder you would touch one of his suits, for success must inevitably wrong some one."

"We lawyers have nothing to do with that. To us a client's cause, good or bad, must be gained, if possible. This is but simple justice to him. Besides, as regards Hartzog, the very hardness of all his cases spurs a young lawyer to do his very best. If he can gain over an opponent who has justice as well as the sympathies of the court in his favour, he must do it by superior skill and talents. Every successful termination of a bad cause in a lawyer's hands is so much added to his reputation, and is worth a dozen good causes, that are gained by their own intrinsic merit more than by the skill of their advocate."

Such sentiments Flora had never before heard from the lips of Mr. Allison. They shocked her greatly. Emily, who knew well how her friend would regard the declaration just made, trembled for the consequences. To her mind they constituted no objections to him; but she had good cause to fear that Flora would so regard them.

For this reason, as Flora said nothing by way of controverting what had been uttered, Emily remarked, addressing Mr. Allison, and smiling as she spoke,

"Of course, this is only a pleasant burlesque. You would not undertake a bad cause if you knew it to be so."

"On the contrary," returned Allison, promptly. "This very cause, that I hope to gain to-morrow, is an exceedingly bad one. Hartzog has no just claim to the property in suit. It was bought from his father, and honestly paid for; but he has discovered a flaw in the title, and upon that hopes to recover what he has no right to whatever."

"And you wish to gain it for him?" Flora said, in a firm voice, looking into Allison's face as she spoke.

"I certainly do, and will gain it, if possible. That is my duty to my client."

"No matter who is wronged?"

"With that I have nothing to do. The court is accountable for injustice, not the lawyer."

Flora said no more, and Emily, seeking to change the conversation, introduced another topic. Allison remained for an hour, and then went away. During the time Flora made no remark except in answer to such as were addressed to her, but she was thoughtful. After Allison had retired, she excused herself and went up to her room. A new light had broken in upon her mind. She had heard enough to satisfy her that the suit which Allison was about to prosecute was against Mrs. Harper. This was as unexpected as it was startling. Could it be possible, she asked herself, with pain-

ful resolution, that one who had so deeply interested her—one to whom her hand, if asked, would have been yielded with little hesitation, could enter the ranks of the oppressor, and wilfully seek to wrest from the widow and orphan their all of worldly possessions? and this, too, in order that his own reputation as an acute lawyer might stand out in bolder relief? She shuddered as she replied to her own question, "Yes, alas! it is too possible."

It was a late hour when she retired to rest. The time was spent in close self-examination. She had striven to read aright her own heart, and also to compare the real admiration she felt for Allison with all she had previously known of his character, to see if the former were a healthy consequence of the latter. The result, she was forced to acknowledge, proved her to have yielded more to the fascinations of his person than to the more genuine attractions of sound moral qualities. This discovery, made under such peculiar circumstances, was not merely glanced at and then turned from, but it was kept resolutely before her mind's eye, while her reason rebuked her for having suffered herself to be deceived as she had been by a mere specious exterior.

In the morning, immediately after breakfast, she went over to Mrs. Harper's, and, unexpectedly to both Mrs. Harper and her daughter, declared her intention of accompanying them to the courtroom. In order to avoid being unpleasantly noticed there, she had dressed herself as plainly as possible, and came provided with a close veil. A male friend of Mrs. Harper's accompanied them, and saw that

they were provided with good places. At ten o'clock, precisely, the trial began. Unseen by Allison, who had not the remotest idea of her presence, and, therefore, remained unaffected by it in any way, Flora could now observe him under new, and, for a correct formation of an opinion in regard to him, most advantageous circumstances. To do this, she had ventured into a place so uncongenial to her feelings, and so inappropriate to her sex. She had resolved to do both him and herself full justice.

The manner in which the case was opened by Allison, before any testimony was brought forward to substantiate the claim set up, shocked Flora's mind as much as the declarations he had made on the previous evening. In this opening there was a levity in his manner of treating the defendants, and a covert insinuation throughout of fraud on the part of Mr. Harper in his purchase of the property, that made her cheeks burn with indignation. But after all the evidence had been laid before the court, and he then went on to advocate the claim of Hartzog, there was an ingenuousness, plausibility, tact, and force about his positions and arguments, that, while it half convinced even Flora herself, made her cheeks, that a short time before burned, now pale with anxiety. She had never before seen him out of the social circle—she had never before seen his mind under the excitement of any strong impulse. Now she listened to his powerful eloquence in wonder and fear: wonder at his masterly command of ideas, arguments, and language, even in a bad cause; and fear, lest he should use his talents too successfully. Acutely

did she follow him throughout the whole course of his speech, marking here his sophistry, there his ungenerous and untrue allusions to the defence, and here, again, his too palpable efforts to mislead the opinion of the court. When he gave to the counsel for Mrs. Harper the floor, her heart trembled for the result. But soon the power, the force, the beauty, and eloquence of truth, as it was presented, calmly, clearly, and in just connexion, cheered her heart with the prospect of justice. The unfairness of Allison's argument was exhibited in a few words, and the subtlety with which he had attempted to mislead, exposed. Then the firm basis, in justice, upon which the title of the property rested, was shown with daylight clearness.

In reply to this, Allison, evidently discomfited, tried to rally and rearrange his forces, but the attempt was a poor one. They were all scattered again by a few words from the counsel on the side of the defence. The case finally closed, and the court gave notice that its opinion would be declared on the next day at ten o'clock. There were doubts in the minds of but few as to the nature of the decision; those doubts were with the parties most interested.

That night was spent by Flora at Mrs. Harper's. Allison called in, as usual, to see her at Whitney's, and was much disappointed at not finding her there. He stayed until near ten o'clock, and then retired; not in a very satisfied state of mind, for Emily had intimated to him the possibility of Flora's finding an objection to him in the sentiments he had imprudently uttered on the evening before.

Morning came, and found Mrs. Harper, her

daughter, and Flora nervously anxious about the anticipated decision. 'The former struggled hard to fortify her mind by reasons drawn from her knowledge of the wonderful care over all His creatures which is exercised by Him who made and continually sustains all parts of His creation, both moral and physical : but this she found an almost impossible task. 'The crisis that was to decide her earthly condition, leaving her in competence, or casting her down into the low vale of poverty, was too near. Tremblingly anxious as they all were, the time passed with them slowly and silently. Expressed hopes could do no good. The point of time in which the decision was to be made was too near to leave room for a fond imagination to create airy palaces. Reality was at hand.

Mr. R——, the advocate who had represented Mrs. Harper in the case, had promised that he would see her immediately on the announcement of the court's decision. For his appearance they were now waiting. Ten o'clock at last came. From that time each of the three anxious expectants could distinctly hear the sound of her own labouring heart. The first, second, and third quarter passed, and yet there was no tidings. A few minutes more must decide. How much hung upon those minutes !

Just then drew near the sound of carriage-wheels. Every heart ceased to beat. It passed ! Another instant, and the bell was rung violently. The servant opened the street door, heavy footsteps were heard in the hall, but the smiling face of the kind advocate in a moment after assured

every one. The decision of the court was all right. Mrs. Harper could not restrain her tears at the announcement; they flowed freely, and mingled with those of her daughter and Flora.

Thus terminated an affair that took at once the scales from Flora's eyes, and enabled her to see deeply into the character of her lover. As from a frightful precipice, to which, lured by beautiful flowers that grew upon its very brink, she started back in alarm. There was nothing now attractive for her in the once fascinating Allison. The drapery that shrouded a loathsome form had been drawn aside for a moment, and the illusion that had kept her beside that form was gone forever. One glance sufficed.

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CHAPTER X.

DECLINING AN OFFER UPON PRINCIPLE.

As Allison had made no direct proposal to Flora, her course was not a difficult one. That such a proposal was to be made she had no reason to doubt, for she had been so informed by Emily. In the afternoon she returned to the house of Mrs. Whitney, and very frankly stated to her where she had been, what she had heard, and, still farther, what effect had been produced upon her mind.

To the effect Emily mainly looked. That disturbed her. In the cause there was nothing to her adequate to such an effect.

"My dear friend," she said, anxiously, "surely you do not intend making a matter of this kind a reason for declining the attentions of a man like Mr. Allison?"

"I certainly do, Emily," was the firm reply.

"But why should you? His profession, and the manner of his prosecuting it, has nothing to do with him as a lover, or, indeed, as a husband. It is at home, not in business, that we are to regard the man of our choice. If we are truly loved and cared for, we need not trouble ourselves about how business is conducted. That is a matter out of our province—a matter of which we cannot judge correctly."

At this moment a sealed note, enveloped in per-

fumed tinted paper, was handed to Flora by the waiter, who had just received it at the door. She broke the seal, without retiring. It was from Allison, and contained an offer of his hand in marriage. The face of the maiden grew instantly pale. Twice she read the note, and then handed it to her friend. A silence of some moments ensued, when Emily said,

"Flora, you will not, you cannot decline this offer!"

"I both will and can," was the firm reply, although her face still remained very pale. "I will never marry a man whose principles I despise as heartily as I despise those of Mr. Allison."

"You are beside yourself, Flora. How can ever false principles, assuming them to be such, acted upon in the mere business relations of life, affect the strength and purity of a man's love for his wife?"

"They must and will affect it," Flora said, earnestly.

"I cannot conceive how."

"It is no problem to my mind, Emily."

"It is, to mine, a problem hard to solve."

"You will admit," said Flora, "that one man may have a love of truth and justice grounded in the internal of his mind, and another a love of truth and justice that is merely assumed?"

"Yes."

"Very well. The first of these characters, then, will show his love of truth and justice in every relation of life; the latter, merely when it subserves his own ends. Cannot you see a great difference between the two?"

“Yes, I think I can.”

“Let me lay down another axiom. A man can only truly love in another what has some affinity for like things in himself. I then ask myself, For what am I loved? Is it for those principles of truth and justice that I am seeking to love supremely, or is it for something external to these? For my person or accomplishments, for instance? If I discover that the individual who thus seeks my favour does not really love these good interior principles, then it is clear that he cannot love me, even if he sees them in me, from any genuine affection for them. He must love me for my person and accomplishments only. Now, if for these alone I am loved—these external things, which must, from familiarity, lose daily and hourly their influence, by what power am I to hold permanently a husband’s affections? If he have no real love for the principles from which I act—can see no beauty in them, but rather feels them as opposed to all his ends of life, how is it possible for us to be more and more conjoined interiorly as time progresses, and we get to *know* each other more and more interiorly? Can you answer that question, Emily?”

“You are merely supposing objections of a nature too abstract to bear upon real life,” was the cold reply to this.

“Emily!” ejaculated her young friend, in painful surprise.

“I confess I cannot see anything very conclusive in your axioms or arguments. They fly far above my head.”

“I am sorry for it,” Flora said, in a changed voice. “Certain it is, however, that between me

and the writer of this note" (holding up the proposal of Allison) "there is a great gulf fixed—and fixed forever. I tremble when I think of the infatuation in regard to him under which I have been labouring."

It was in vain that her friend urged her to take time for reflection before deciding to reject the offer just made to her to meet Allison, and let him explain the things to which she objected. Flora was immovable. On the next day she returned to her suiter his note, with an answer, in which she declined meeting his proposal; and in the evening was at Rose Hill, opening up to her mother her whole heart.

As soon as Allison had received the answer to his note, he sought out his particular friend Whitney, and asked of him an explanation of Flora's conduct.

"She's a fool! That's the best explanation I can give," was the impatient reply of Whitney.

"But I want a more satisfactory reason than that," Allison said.

"You were so unfortunate as to be retained in a case against a particular friend of hers."

"What case?"

"That of Hartzog against the estate of Harper."

"Is Mrs. Harper her friend?"

"Yes; the families are intimate."

"The result was, however, in her favour."

"Yes, I know; but the prying, forward gipsy, if I must so speak of her, went to the courtroom in disguise, for the very purpose of seeing how you would conduct the case. You happened not to do

the thing exactly according to her liking, and for this reason she has given you the mitten."

"You must certainly be jesting," Allison replied to this, the colour mounting to his face.

"No, I am not. She told Emily all about it; and how you tried your best, as a lawyer, to wrong Mrs. Harper out of her property, or, in other words, gain your client's cause."

"As I was in duty bound to do."

"Of course; but the girl thinks herself a wonderfully wise one. Emily tells me, now, that she tried her best to persuade her not to marry me, alleging it as her opinion that I would neglect and abuse my wife before ten years had passed over our heads."

"Really, I am confounded! Can all this be true?"

"Yes, as true as that you are alive."

"And she really disguised herself and came into the courtroom during the progress of the trial?"

"She did, upon her own confession."

"And took a prejudice against me because I strove, like an honest man, to gain my client's cause?"

"Yes."

"And tried to break off the match between you and Emily?"

"She did."

Was ever such a piece of bold-faced duplicity acted out in real life before? Am I not fortunate in having escaped before a discovery of my mistake would have been in vain? Happy riddance! say I."

"Yes, that you may say with truth and feeling.

For my part, I confess myself to have been strangely deceived in Flora Elton. I always thought her a frank, sensible girl ; but this affair has presented her in other colours. Poor Emily is greatly troubled by her conduct, and tries to make excuses for her ; but I won't hear a word in her favour, and have told Emily that she must cease to hold any farther intercourse with her. I think her a very dangerous person. She knows too much."

"Where is she now?"

"She left this morning for Rose Hill."

"Where I hope she may stay."

"Where she will stay, for all I can do," Whitney said, angrily.

"There are good fish yet in the sea," Allison remarked, after a short silence, in a gay tone, rising and walking the floor with a brisk air.

"Yes, and much more easily caught than that floundering torpedo that has just broken the meshes of your net."

"And, when caught, worth a thousand of her."

"Oh ! ay, in more senses than one. I have several times wondered that the modest little Rose Hill should have outweighed in your estimation the more substantial claims of a certain splendid estate on Long Island, that could be named, backed by half a million in city expectancies."

"Haven't you guessed the reason before this?"

"No."

"Flora is a girl of brilliant mind. She would shine with the best, so far as intelligence is concerned."

"Well?"

“The heir-presumptive of the Long Island estate and the city expectancies is a simpering, silly little creature ; well enough to dance with, but not exactly the kind of companion wanted by a man with my views in life.”

“Oh yes ; you are looking forward to becoming an M. C., or something higher.”

“I am, and, what is more, will attain my end. And when that is attained, I wish to have a wife of whose intellect I shall not be ashamed ; one of whom I shall feel really proud. It was this reason, and this only, that induced me to pass by many golden attractions and fix upon Flora Elton.”

“But the golden attractions will now take the ascendant, I presume.”

“Perhaps so ; but I am not yet able to speak upon this subject. I have been knocked down so suddenly, that, although on my feet again, I do not yet see clearly. After a while I shall understand myself better, I hope.”

The young lady to whom allusion was made so lightly was named Arabella Lyon. She resided in the family of a rich uncle and aunt in the city, who had no children of their own. In the eyes of every one, Arabella was the heir in expectancy, as Whitney had said, of the large fortune of her uncle, Mr. Lorman. This tempting expectancy had exercised a strong influence, in times past, upon Allison ; but ambition was a powerful principle in his mind, and from this, looking to a high position in society, not from wealth, but talent, he felt bound to seek one for a wife of more intellect than was displayed by the sprightly little Arabella Lyon.

Disappointed in his suit with Flora Elton, he

soon began to think, with something of his former seriousness, of Miss Lyon. "After all," he argued with himself, "it might be bad policy to get a woman of too much sense for a wife. She might prove hard to manage; and to be checked and called to account by a wife is what I never could stand."

Finally, Allison came to the conclusion that half a million of dollars would be much more easily managed than a wife who had too much sense, and upon this conclusion he acted. His attentions to Arabella were renewed, but did not meet with much favour from Mr. Lorman, who had never fancied the young attorney. An offer for her hand was next made. This the uncle declined, although the niece was very willing. A secret marriage was the result. When this became known to Mr. Lorman, he was deeply incensed; but, being much attached to his niece, she was, after a time, forgiven, and received again into the old man's affections.

CHAPTER XI.

ANOTHER BRIDAL.

IN Flora's sudden resolution and precipitate action, her feelings were consulted less than her judgment. Had she suffered the former to speak, they would have pleaded hard for Allison. This she well knew, and, therefore, acting from a clear conviction of right, she gave her heart no time thus to plead for the object of its regard, until it was too late. After she had, with tearful eyes, related all to her mother, dwelling upon the deep interest she had felt for him, the latter said,

“ Ah, my child, you have escaped, I doubt not, a lifetime of wretchedness. I knew Mr. Allison's father well. His wife was one of my dearest friends; we were girls together; she married about the same time that I did; ten years after she died, I think, of a broken heart. Her husband was not a man of good principles, nor had he for his sweet wife any well-grounded love. Young and beautiful, her lovely person was his admiration; he offered himself, and was accepted. A year or two sufficed to bring on satiety. Ill health rendered her less attractive than at first. He grew cold, then careless, and then unkind. The tears he shed for her when the clods of the valley sounded upon her coffin-lid were for the eyes of others, not for his loss. ‘Like father like son’ is not an unmeaning adage. It is founded in the nature of

things, and, having been confirmed by general observation, has passed into a proverb. The son of a man who has called bad principles good, and not only called them so, but made them rules of conduct in life, must inherit a tendency to like moral obliquities. It does not necessarily follow that he will, in actual life, make these tendencies to evil his own. He need not, if he will oppose them; but, if he yield at all to their impulses, he is in great danger of becoming their slave. In such danger I should naturally suppose young Allison to be; and, if ignorant of all that you have discovered, and he were now to ask me for your hand, I would not yield it up until I possessed the most indubitable proofs that he had actually risen above his hereditary inclinations. That he has not, in one respect at least, what you have yourself heard and seen, clearly shows. How far he has been influenced, in the passion declared, by external accomplishments alone, it is not possible for me to say. I must believe, however, that these have mainly influenced him."

"To that conclusion my own mind has already come," Flora said. "He could not have loved goodness in me, for he seems not to regard goodness in the abstract as anything."

"And no man who does not seek to love what is good and what is true, can make a woman really happy. This, believe me, my child, is an immutable truth."

Thus Mrs. Elton sought to encourage and strengthen her daughter's mind, that, she could plainly see, was suffering keenly. The image stamped upon her heart could not be effaced in a

moment. It still rested there, and it required a constant effort to keep from regarding it with pleasurable feelings. More difficult than she had at first imagined it would be was her self-imposed task. Many a sleepless hour, through the night-watches, did it cause her, robbing her cheek of its bloom, her eye of its brightness, and her step of its buoyant grace ; but she struggled hard, sustained by an ever undimmed consciousness that she had acted right. In this way months elapsed, during which time she had not once left Rose Hill, nor once heard from her friend Emily. With her, under the circumstances, she did not venture to communicate. She rightly imagined the cause of her silence to lie in her husband's anger at her refusal of his friend's offer, upon the ground of alleged unworthiness from base principles.

Doctor Arlington heard that Flora had come back, a day or two after her return from New-York ; but, remembering the reserve and coldness with which she had treated him, he did not venture, for some time, to call upon her. When he did do so, he noticed, with pain, that there was a change in her—a change that indicated mental suffering. Her manner was kind, sincere, and altogether unaffected ; but there was something about her that he could not comprehend. Of one thing he was satisfied, that she did not feel the same interest in him that he felt in her. A whole week elapsed, and he called in again and spent an hour with Flora and her mother. The former looked thoughtful, and said but little. Something evidently preyed upon her mind. The effect of this was to produce in Arlington a deeper tender-

ness for her, that had in it little of a regard to self. Gradually, as he continued his visits, evincing all the while a delicacy of feeling that Flora had never before perceived, she began to find pleasure in his society. After a while her thoughts turned towards him while absent, and her mind pondered over some of the sentiments he had uttered, finding in them both purity, truth, and beauty. From this, by an easy transition, contrasts began to arise in her thoughts between the brilliant, attractive Allison, and the plain country doctor. She took sentiments that both had uttered, and weighed them calmly ; she compared known acts of each. The result was in favour of the less imposing of the two personages. Doctor Arlington was sound to the core, if the external he presented was not so pleasing ; and, as her good sense quickly told her that what was within must come out, she readily saw that, in the end, both the external and the internal of Doctor Arlington would be far more attractive, and gain a wider commendation, than the other's possibly could. So far as the power of rendering a wife happy was concerned, she felt that there was no comparison between them.

A willingness to admit so much as this, even in thought, would have been a good omen for the doctor, had he only been able to read the maiden's thoughts ; but if he could not do this, he could very easily perceive something nearly resembling a likeness of them in her manner : at least, a likeness of so much of them as favoured himself. The natural result was an increased regard, manifested with a delicacy that touched more deeply the heart of Flora. She felt the truth, that one was seeking

to win her, not by dazzling her mind, and thus taking her captive, but by endeavouring to inspire her with the same tender sentiments that pervaded his own bosom. After this, there were few obstacles to be overcome by Arlington, but he was in no hurry to consummate his wishes. Marriage, in his eyes, was too pure and holy a state to be rushed into from any suddenly-inspired impulses. For himself, he was fully satisfied in regard to Flora, but he would have shuddered at the thought of marrying her while she was not as fully and as rationally satisfied in regard to him. That she might be able to know him well, he made no offer of himself for nearly a year after her return from the city, although, during that time, he visited her constantly, and showed her the most delicate attentions. When he did ask the happiness of calling the hand he tenderly clasped his own, that hand was yielded with a thrill of interior joy. The love that united them was based upon an accurate knowledge of each other's moral qualities, the exponents of which existed in a truly corresponding intelligence. These could not grow old nor fade, but ever bloom in vernal beauty. On these the corroding finger of time could make no impression. Sickness might blast, "or pain devour;" the eye lose its brightness, and the cheek its soft vermilion, yet love like this would burn on with a brighter blaze.

Long before this event, she had heard of the marriage of Allison to Arabella Lyon without an emotion of pain. But a short period elapsed after Doctor Arlington's declaration of love before a happy wedding-party assembled at Rose Hill. We need not say who was married.

CHAPTER XII.

TIME'S DEVELOPMENTS.

AFTER the lapse of ten years, we will again introduce our characters. It rarely takes even so long as that comparatively brief period of time to prove the quality of any marriage—to take off all deceiving externals, and show the partners whether their union be for happiness or misery. Alas! that it should so often bring a sad consciousness that there is between the man and wife no truly uniting principle.

Doctor Arlington we find in the city of New-York. He lives in a handsomely-furnished house, situated in Park Place. Some years after his marriage he removed with his wife to the city, where he entered upon the practice of his profession. For a time he had hard struggles; then he began to feel something like solid ground under his feet. A few important cases in families of influence, skilfully managed, attracted attention. Practice began to increase. Four years afterward his standing with the profession was so high, that he was elected to fill a vacancy that occurred in the medical department of the New-York University. One year subsequent to this time we again bring him before the reader.

It is an evening late in the fall of the year. A bright fire is glowing in the well-filled grate, that

diffuses through a beautiful parlour the genial warmth of summer. Before this a sofa has been drawn ; on the sofa we find Flora and her estimable husband. He seems more changed than his wife. His face does not look so uninteresting as it did ; its thoughtful air accords more with the years and standing of the medical profession of thirty-five, than it did with the country doctor of scarce twenty-five. And more than this, the bringing out into active usefulness the principles he was then storing up, has given to his countenance an elevation that has in it the beauty of wisdom. Still, there are to be seen the defects of early education, which are never wholly eradicated. "Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined," is as true of external accomplishments as of the moral tendencies for good or for evil that are stamped upon the mind in youth. Both may be changed in a degree, but the bias will remain forever. The movements of the doctor had never been, and were not now, easy and graceful. He had not entirely overcome his bashful modesty, and was too much inclined to be reserved and silent in company ; but none of these defects were now apparent to his wife. The high sense of honour, founded in truth and justice, that governed every action—his tenderness towards her, that was ever the same, or that increased rather than diminished—the richness of his intellectual endowments, and the clearness of his mind—these were all seen and loved—these concealed from her merely external defects. She had, too, a wife's pride in her husband's reputation. In his honour she was honoured.

"I have been thinking all the afternoon about

my old friend Emily Whitney," Flora remarked, as she sat with her husband, on the evening just mentioned. "It is now more than ten years since I parted from her. During this time we have not met, nor passed even a letter. I wonder if she is still alive. I believe she went south with her husband after the death of his father, which took place before we left Rose Hill, but I am not certain. If she were still residing in the city, I think I should have heard of it in some way. Her own father became a bankrupt, and died years ago."

"I have not met with Mr. Whitney since our residence here, and think it more than probable that he has left New-York, as you suppose. His father left him only a small portion of his property, alleging in his will, it is said, that twenty thousand dollars were enough for him to squander, if he continued his habits, or capital enough for a young man to build a fortune upon, if he chose to give proper attention, as every young man should, to some business, whereby the whole community as well as himself might be benefited. I am afraid the foolish young man confirmed his father's fears by soon squandering his little fortune."

"Poor Emily! If such be the case, she has sadly realized, I fear, the truth of what I tried in vain to impress upon her mind. She did not seem to think it of any consequence what principles governed her husband, so that he loved her. She judged of a man by his exterior. Into his motives and ends of action she never thought of inquiring."

"Such being the case, she has, you may well fear, long ere this discovered her mistake."

Just at this moment a messenger came in haste, requiring Doctor Arlington's immediate attendance on a lady represented to have been taken suddenly ill. His carriage was ordered and the summons at once obeyed. The house at which he had been directed to call was a large and elegant residence in Broadway, at some distance beyond Niblo's. On entering this, he was met by the owner, whose face showed much concern, and asked to go up immediately to his wife's chamber, who was labouring under a sudden attack of illness, the nature of which he did not attempt to define.

"This is the fourth attack that she has had, doctor," he remarked, "in each of which I have called in a different physician, hoping to find some one with skill enough to remove the predisposition as well as the disease. Your high reputation has led me to place her in your hands now. Let me beg of you to give to her case your most skilful attentions. Her disease is a sudden prostration, without an apparently adequate cause, of both physical and mental powers, from which her recovery has, heretofore, been very slow. The thousand questions and suggestions of visitors and friends as to the real cause have become painfully annoying to both of us. Occasionally a scandalous rumour accounting for the illness will faintly reach our ears, and make my poor wife unhappy for days at a time. The affection is nervous altogether, and ought, I think, to be reached by some medicaments or course of treatment known to your profession."

After saying this, the husband conducted Doctor Arlington up to the chamber of his patient. He

found a small, delicately-formed woman, with a face as white as marble, lying in a state of perfect unconsciousness upon a bed. A single female servant was in the room. He took her thin, almost transparent hand, in his. It was cold and clammy. There was no perceptible motion of the artery in her wrist, upon which he laid his fingers, nor could he discover that her heart beat at all, by pressure over the region where it lay. If there was any respiration, it was not apparent to the unassisted senses. A small mirror, held before her face, however, soon became dimmed with condensing moisture, showing that she still breathed, and was, of course, alive. As soon as he had ascertained this fact, the doctor turned to her husband, and said,

“Will you now be kind enough to tell me, as far as you can conjecture, the cause of the present condition of your wife?”

“As I have before said, doctor,” was the reply, “I am utterly ignorant of the cause. This morning she was, to all appearance, as well and happy as ever she was in her life. When I left her after dinner, she seemed, I thought, to droop a little; but I did not think anything of it until I was suddenly recalled from my office an hour since, where business detained me later than usual, by the painful intelligence that she had been again attacked with a paralysis of both mind and body.”

“And you are ignorant of the cause?” As the doctor asked this question, he looked the man steadily in the face.

“As ignorant as yourself,” was the unhesitating reply.

This positive declaration did not satisfy the mind of the physician. The husband was too ignorant, apparently, of the cause of this illness. The fact of there being no one with her but a domestic, created a suspicion in his mind that all was not right. The concern evinced seemed more to regard appearance than to arise from a real anxiety about the suffering wife ; but his duty was to administer to the patient in accordance with the best information in regard to her condition that he could devise, and he proceeded to do so. Three hours were spent in efforts to restore animation, but no success followed. Doctor Arlington then went away, stating, as he did so, that he would visit her again by daylight on the next morning.

At daylight he was there. Little or no change had taken place since the night before, except that her features looked more shrunken, and had a ghastliness about them, that made him fearful about the result. Three children were in the parlour when he entered, sporting in gay unconsciousness of their mother's real condition. The sight touched his heart. Much to his surprise, there was yet no one with the sick woman but the domestic first seen in attendance. This strengthened his fears that all was not as it should be between her and her husband.

In the course of three hours he called in again, and continued to do so through the day, at about like intervals of time. Not until near night did he perceive any signs of returning animation. Then the rising and falling of her chest in respiration could be distinctly seen, and the motion of her heart felt. About nine o'clock she roused up, and

lifting her head, looked anxiously about the room. But two countenances bent over her, that of her husband and that of the physician. She fixed her eyes first upon one and then upon the other for a moment or two; then, sighing deeply, she closed them, and lay with a shade of most touching sadness resting upon her pale, thin face.

After leaving prescriptions, and giving directions in what manner to have them given, Doctor Arlington retired, promising to call in early on the following morning. It was after ten when he reached home. Flora was alone in the parlour, reading. She put down the book, and looked smilingly into her husband's face as he came in.

"You are late to-night," she said, as he sat down by her side.

"Yes, rather later than usual; but the detention has relieved my mind a good deal, for it has enabled me to see a change for the better in a painfully interesting case. For the last two or three days I have been attending a lady most singularly affected, and under, it seems to me, rather singular circumstances. I was called in by her husband, who is a lawyer standing high at the bar here, and found her in a kind of catalepsy, for the occurrence of which he could not give me any reason. This, he said, was her third attack. That he knows the real cause, I am well satisfied. That his conduct towards her, in some respect or other, is in fact the true cause, I have little doubt. In nothing that I observed, in his actions or words, could I see any concern for his wife's condition, above the fear that it would excite strange rumours in regard to the family. Ah, Flora! no one even faintly dreams

of the heart-corroding misery that is shrouded from every eye by the secrecy of the marriage-chamber. The physician, in his daily rounds, catches, at times, a glimpse of what a neglected, suffering wife is struggling to conceal. But the tithe is never known even by him."

"The lady you speak of is better?" Flora said, in a concerned manner.

"Yes; after lying for more than twenty-four hours perfectly insensible, and almost lifeless, she revived and became apparently conscious; but it did not seem to be a glad consciousness. Like one awakened from a pleasing dream to some sad reality, she closed her eyes and seemed anxious to sleep again."

"Who is she?"

"The wife of an eminent lawyer here, named Allison."

Mrs. Arlington started as if a current of electricity had suddenly passed through her nerves, while her face turned pale.

"It is not Mr. Allison's wife, surely?" she said, laying her hand upon that of her husband.

"Yes, Flora, it is; but did you know her?"

"Know Arabella Lyon? Oh, yes. Gay little Arabella was once a favourite friend. A heart full of innocence and trusting confidence was hers. I wonder not that it has been broken."

"Did you know her husband likewise?"

At this question Flora closed the hand she had laid upon her husband's tightly, and looked into his face with moistened, but tender and confiding eyes.

"Yes, dear, I knew him also. He was a man

of winning exterior, and once interested me deeply but I discovered, ere it was too late, that he was void of true principles, and when he offered himself, declined the proposal without a moment's hesitation. He then addressed and married Arabella Lyon, against the wish of her uncle, who had raised her from a child. A kind Providence then sent you to me, with words of affection, my kind, good husband! For that boon how can I ever be sufficiently grateful?"

The dim eyes of Mrs. Arlington overflowed, and laying her head upon the breast of her husband, she wept tears of thankful gladness.

CHAPTER XIII.

SAD CONSEQUENCES OF A MARRIAGE ENTERED
INTO FROM WRONG ENDS.

ARABELLA LYON, from a playful, sprightly girl, became a fond and devoted wife. Won by the personal charms of her husband, her heart invested the object of its tender regard with virtues to which he was an utter stranger. Years passed before the veil fell from her eyes. When it did fall, and she awoke to the sad reality, her heart received a wound that nothing on earth could heal. Of the principles that governed her husband's conduct in the general affairs of life, she knew nothing—she perceived and felt only what regarded herself. In fact, her mind was not a very discrimi-

nating one, and in all matters that did not affect herself, his representations were taken without a doubt of their truth ; but her affections were strong. To love her husband was to make him an idol ; and, though he might be hideous to all the world from moral deformity, if he smiled upon her she asked no more.

Four years passed without a cloud dimming her bright horizon. At the end of that period, both her uncle and aunt died suddenly. Nearly the whole of their great wealth was bequeathed to a distant relative. A few thousands of dollars alone were left to the niece. Allison, who, with expectations raised to a high pitch, was present at the opening of the will, left the room the moment its contents were known. He was terribly disappointed. Returning home, he entered the room where his wife sat, and throwing himself into a chair, said, with bitter emphasis, and a dark scowl upon his brow,

“ Your cursed old fool of an uncle has cut you off with the paltry sum of five thousand dollars ! ”

“ Oh, Henry ! ” ejaculated the young wife, starting to her feet in alarm—not at the announced loss of anticipated wealth, but at the strange words and still stranger manner of her husband, “ do not speak so.”

“ The old wretch ! ” was all the response of Allison, as he ground his teeth in anger.

Arabella had never seen anything like this before in her husband. She had often noticed that he was easily excited, but towards her, and in her presence, his manner had been mainly gentle since their marriage, though not as affectionate as she could have desired. To her uncle and aunt he

had ever been kind and attentive ; and yet all had been assumed. He had married Arabella, not because he loved her above all other women—not because he thought her the most congenial companion he could find, but for money. As to her intellect, that he despised. The wealth for which he had married was in the hands of the uncle. To make sure of this, he strove to appear one of the best and kindest of husbands. He deceived only Arabella. Her shrewd relative saw much more deeply into his character ; and justly incensed that his wealth should have been the prize aimed at in running away with his niece, he resolved to disappoint the sordid money-hunter ; and he did so effectually.

“ Henry,” said his wife, going up to him and laying her hand gently upon his arm, after the last-mentioned bitter ejaculation had been uttered, “ let us be thankful that we are yet left to each other. My uncle had the power to give his money to whom he chose, but he cannot rob us of mutual love. Think of that, Henry.”

Her husband did not reply to this. He only looked at her coldly and sternly. The expression of his countenance made her shudder. Covering her face with her hands, she shrunk away from him, and, dropping into a chair, began to weep. At this Allison arose, and muttering something, the import of which she but half comprehended, left the apartment. The street door closed a minute after with a heavy jar. The sound of this made Arabella start to her feet. For some moments she stood with a bewildered air, and then sunk into the chair from which she had risen,

burying her face in her hands and again crying bitterly.

This occurred early in the day. The dinner hour came, but Allison did not return. He cared as little to eat as he did to see his wife. Arabella waited anxiously, and wept at the long delay. The food was removed untasted. Slowly and wearily passed the hours until nightfall. At last the sound of his footsteps was heard below, and his wife sprang down the stairs to meet him; but he received her coldly, and declined answering her questions as to why he had not come home at the usual hour. Checked and chilled to the heart, Arabella shrunk away from him, while he showed no inclination to confer with her upon any subject. When tea was announced, he took his place at the table in silence. She did not venture to speak to him again, and he said nothing to her. He sat but a little while, and then retired into the parlour. Thither his wife did not follow, but went up into her chamber to attend to her child, a boy now nearly three years old. The prattle of the bright little fellow did not charm her ear as it had ever done before. Her thoughts were away from him. Not until his tiny hands were pressed to her face, and his voice, changed to a saddened tone, uttered the words,

“Don’t cry, mamma—Henry be a good boy,” was she conscious that she was really weeping. Drying her tears hastily, she lifted him in her arms and clasped him tightly to her bosom, murmuring as she did so,

“Dear, dear child!” then laying him in his little bed, she kissed him tenderly, and, after return-

ing his "good-night," went down stairs. As she entered the parlour, she heard the street door close. Her husband had left the house. A heart-sickening thought came into her mind—the thought that he had never loved her—that he had sought her hand in the hope of obtaining with it the riches that common rumour said she was to inherit from her uncle ; but this was instantly repelled as an idea not to be entertained for a moment.

In the mean time, Allison, whose disappointment had been so sudden and so severe as to deprive him of even decent self-control, went from his house to his office, where he threw himself into a chair, and sat for nearly half an hour almost as immovable as a statue. There was but one feeling and one thought active in his mind. Rousing himself up at last, and rising to his feet as he uttered a bitter imprecation against the individual who had chosen to cut him off with a mere nominal bequest, he sought the mechanical relief of walking hurriedly the floor of his office. As he did so, a thought of the cruelty of his conduct towards Arabella crossed his mind, and also the necessity of keeping up appearances in regard to her. This thought was but the germ of others of a like character. Shame, if not a better feeling, caused his cheek to burn, as he remembered how rudely he had treated her, and how apparent it must be to her mind that he cared little for her in comparison with the wealth of her deceased uncle. Influenced by these thoughts, he had already made a movement to leave his office and return home, when the door opened and his wife glided in.

"Arabella !" he exclaimed, in surprise.

“ Dear husband !” she said, endeavouring to smile as she advanced towards him, “ I tried to compel myself to wait until you returned home, but I could not. My heart fluttered so, try all that I would to keep it still, that I was frightened. Do not be angry with me for coming here in the hope of finding you. I could not help it. And now I am here, tell me why you turned from me so coldly. You will kill me if you do not.”

There was a wildness about the eyes of Arabella that her forced smile could not hide, while she panted rather than breathed. This her husband saw, and it alarmed him.

“ Don’t be a foolish child,” he returned, in a half-playful, half-reproving tone ; “ I was too much mortified and disappointed at the will to be myself ; and still, I cannot get over it.”

“ Surely we needn’t mind that, dear husband !” returned Arabella, earnestly. “ Mere wealth cannot give happiness. If you will never think of it again, I will not. Your lot, be it what it may, I am willing to share.”

The fond devotedness of his wife, expressed with an eloquence of feeling that gave power to every word, touched Allison, and led him to change his whole manner towards her. He answered kindly, and at once returned with her to their house, where he spent the evening in a forced effort to appear as he had before appeared ; but the strong incentive that had for years caused him to act in an assumed character so perfectly as to deceive even the eyes of his wife, no longer existed. It was hard work, therefore, to be as he had been, especially as the shock that undeceived him in the

matter of his great expectations had been of such recent occurrence. Arabella felt that her husband was indeed changed. There was no affection in his words—no heart in his smile. All appeared to her as it really was, dead, cold acting. It was not long before conversation ceased altogether, and both husband and wife became buried in thoughts that neither would like to have uttered.

From that time there was a gradual change in Allison's manner towards his wife. He was not openly unkind, but silent at first, then cold, and, finally, indifferent. Through her, he had long done homage at the shrine of Mammon, but his golden hopes had proved vain; and when he turned from the false god he had worshipped, he no longer regarded the priest with interest. Fixing his eye once more with a steadier gaze upon the star that had charmed his vision, ere the hope of attaining great wealth had caused him to look away from it, he resolved to make more rapid strides than had yet been made towards reaching that eminence among men after which his soul longed. He had talents, already stood high as a skilful lawyer, and had a large and increasing practice. A proud eminence among men of talents awaited him.

In selecting Flora Elton, years before, as the one most suited to become his partner in life, he had looked, above all other merits that she possessed, to the fact that she had a strong, well-stored, finely-balanced mind, and would reflect honour upon her husband as a man of talents, no matter how high in the social rank he might be able to place her. But she whom he now called his

wife could throw no such lustre upon her husband ; she had not a strong, brilliant mind ; she was not an intellectual woman. This fact was continually pressing itself upon him, the more active the spirit of ambition became within him ; and the more he allowed himself thus to think, the more he saw the weakness of her mind, and the more contempt he felt for it. It was impossible for such thoughts to exist without their exhibition to his wife in some form or other. Poor Arabella soon learned the sad truth, that she had lost all power over her husband. His indifference he no longer attempted to conceal, except in company, and then a consciousness that he was indifferent led him to show her unnecessary attentions, in order to deceive the general eye. In this he was ordinarily successful—so much so, that Arabella was often congratulated on possessing so devoted a husband, at the very moment that her heart was aching on account of his neglect.

CHAPTER XIV.

FIRST AFFECTIONS.

ABOUT a year after the death of Arabella's uncle, the circle in which Allison and his wife moved was rendered more attractive than usual by the presence of a young lady from Boston of a very high order of mind. Her name was Agnes Benton. All were alike fascinated—some by her beauty, others by her wit and vivacity, and more by her superior intellectual attainments. Among the latter was Allison. The first hour passed in company with Agnes Benton caused him to sigh that he was not free to ask her, or one like her, to share his lot in life—to struggle up, with him, into eminence, and, from a high position, reflect back upon society the brightness of his fame. Never before had his own wife appeared so insignificant in his eyes—never before had he felt so profound a contempt for her mental endowments. From that time he went oftener than before into company. The charm that allured him was the fascinating Miss Benton. Unhappily, the young lady not only perceived the admiration felt for her by the talented lawyer, but her vanity led her to court his attentions. With all her brilliant qualities of mind, she had not a true woman's high sense of honour; in this she was far below Mrs. Allison, whose heart was in its right place.

Love of admiration, not the love of high intellectual communion, as she flattered herself was the case, caused Agnes to affect a great regard for the wife of Allison, and to visit her frequently, always remaining when she did so until towards teatime, and then yielding to the polite request to stay and spend the evening, which Arabella could not well help making. Allison never went out when Agnes was there ; even engagements were broken for the pleasure of her society. Poor Arabella could not help noting the great difference in her husband when he came in and found only herself at home, and when, as it now frequently happened, Agnes was there. To the latter, his manner exhibited all the warmth that had blessed the heart of his wife in former days, when she was the object upon which he lavished his attentions. Although little inclined, by nature, to jealousy, the devotion of her husband to this fascinating woman, and the mutual interest which they seemed to take in each other, alarmed her fears, at the same time that it awakened her indignation. She still loved him, and had a wife's pride in his talents. To see him made the dupe of a designing creature, who flattered his vanity that she might be courted and flattered in return, pained and mortified her, on the one hand, while this stronger evidence than she had yet seen of diminished love, wounded her heart in its tenderest region.

For a time, merely to gratify her husband, Arabella strove to seem pleased with Miss Benton. But soon perceiving that they grew more and more intimate, and less inclined to conceal that intimacy, her eyes became at once fully opened. Before.

she had tried to persuade herself that the pleasure they took in each other's company arose altogether from a congeniality of intellect, that is, from the mutual pleasure they felt in conversing on subjects in which both took an interest; but the scales at length fell from her eyes, and she saw the real truth in the broad light of day. It happened in this wise.

Miss Benton called in, some months after the date of her first acquaintance with Allison, to spend an afternoon with his wife. Her manner of treating Arabella had, unperceived by herself, changed. Allison had not hesitated to allude, in some of his conversations with her, to the fact of his wife's intellectual inferiority, even basely venturing to express regret that he should be united for life to one so altogether uncongenial. "Had my lot been cast with a mind as brilliantly endowed as yours," he went so far as to say, "how happy, instead of miserable, from the clog that hinders my feet, would I have been!"

This remark, instead of causing Agnes Benton, as it would have caused any pure-minded woman, to turn away from Allison with indignant contempt, was received with silent pleasure. It was a tribute to her self-esteem—to her proud consciousness of intellectual superiority; and, as such, it had a lulling sound for her ear. After that, her manner towards his wife changed; she did not treat her with the attention she had formerly shown; her visits were as frequent, but there was less effort to conceal the real estimation in which she held her.

On the occasion just alluded to, she called in late in the afternoon. Mrs. Allison received her

coldly. Contrary to the determination she had formed, she requested her to take off her bonnet and shawl; but she could not ask her to remain to tea. 'This was not necessary. Miss Benton did not need such an invitation. Compelling herself to put on the external of politeness, Mrs. Allison forced a conversation with her visiter, in which the latter exhibited a well-bred indifference, that did not escape Arabella's notice. At length evening closed in, and Mr. Allison returned from his office.

"How do you do, Miss Benton?" he said, a bright smile spreading over his face as he perceived the visiter; "I am really glad to see you;" and as he spoke he advanced to her, and, taking her hand, shook it warmly.

The manner of Miss Benton changed in an instant. Her countenance lightened up, her eye dilated, her whole frame quivered with a new inspiration. For a moment Mrs. Allison looked at them, as they became engaged in an animated conversation upon some topic that had no interest for her, sighed, and then left the room to look after some domestic duties that her efforts to entertain her unwelcome visiter had caused her to neglect. As she did so, her husband paused, and glanced after her. As soon as he thought her beyond the reach of his voice, he turned to Agnes and said, in a tone of sadness,

"Ah, Miss Benton, no one can imagine how deeply, how constantly I regret having, in a moment of weakness, united myself to a woman who is excellent enough in her way, but who cannot sympathize with me in that which is nearest my heart. I look up, up, up, to a high and glorious

position. I seek to win the world's high meed of fame ; but she looks down at the little things about her feet. She would have made a man of less ambition than myself happy. Me she cannot !”

As he said this, Allison sighed, and cast his eyes upon the floor. Miss Benton sat in breathless silence.

“How madly,” resumed Allison, “do we often, in earlier years, commit follies for which no after repentance can atone ! Such a folly I committed when I married Arabella.”

“Certainly your wife is an excellent little woman,” was replied to this, “but does not, I should think, possess a mind congenial with yours.”

“Congenial with mine ! No ; there is nothing in common between us. Ah, Miss Benton, I sometimes think, if it had only been my good fortune to have met with you before—”

A groan, instantly succeeded by the sound of a heavy body falling close by the door of the room within which they sat, startled the infatuated pair. Allison rushed into the passage. The body of his wife lay insensible at his feet. Lifting her in his arms, he carried her up stairs, followed by Miss Benton. It seemed an ordinary fainting fit, and efforts were made to restore her by the ordinary means resorted to in such cases ; but hours passed without the least sign of returning animation. Then, in alarm, a physician was sent for. No satisfactory account was given to him of the cause of this sudden suspension of vitality. That cause, truly guessed by her husband and Agnes Benton, could not even be remotely hinted at by either of them. All through the night and the next day

Mrs. Allison remained like one dead. No pulsation of the heart, no respiration was visible. Her face wore the hue of death. No one out of the house was informed of her condition. Agnes, alarmed at what had taken place, more on account of the cause, and dreaded consequences to herself, than the fact, remained with Arabella throughout the whole of the day and the next night. On the second morning some signs of returning animation were visible. These gave light to the physician in the application of remedies, so that he was able to meet the effort of nature, and guide it in its healthy action. He was standing by her bedside, with her husband and Agnes, when consciousness came back to Mrs. Allison. She raised herself up slowly, looking first steadily into the physician's face, then glancing towards her husband, and finally fixing her eyes upon Agnes, who half shrunk from their penetrating gaze, like a guilty thing as she was—guilty of having trampled upon a heart already crushed and bleeding.

"A beautiful serpent to carry so deadly a sting," murmured the wife, in a wandering manner, pointing, as she spoke, to Miss Benton.

The latter shrunk away instantly, and left the room. The patient seemed relieved at this, laid herself back upon her pillow, and breathed more freely. With professional tact, the doctor seemed not to notice this remark; but it startled Allison almost as much as it had Agnes Benton. When the doctor left the house, it was found that Agnes had gone also. Allison was relieved at this. He had gone too far with her; the effect upon his wife—who had, he rightly conjectured, overheard

their conversation—of his intimacy with another woman, made him conscious of this.

Months passed before Mrs. Allison was anything better than a drooping invalid. Friends wondered at the great change that had taken place, but guessed not at the real cause. A sudden and unaccountable asphyxia was given as the reason for subsequent ill-health. This was enough to satisfy ordinary observers. A few, more curious or more penetrating than the rest, surmised causes still deeper than the one alleged—the cause, in fact, of that cause. But these were careful how they made suggestions in regard to the case. As for Agnes Benton, the result of her unprincipled conduct caused her immediate return to Boston. A few months afterward she again visited New-York, but Allison and she mutually avoided each other.

The birth of another child, some six months after the terrible discovery she had made in regard to the state of her husband's affections, gave a new direction to the thoughts of Mrs. Allison. She had now two children, one a helpless babe, that required her constant care. To these children she devoted herself with unwearied assiduity, rarely going into company, unless strongly urged to do so by her husband. When she did go abroad, her changed appearance made her the subject of many remarks. Some perceived, in her pale, thin face, and eyes that seemed to be looking inward instead of upon external things, only the indications of ill-health. But others knew the signs of mental suffering too well.

Thus time passed on, the neglected wife wasting

slowly away from disease of the mind, that weakened rather than gave life to the vital organs.

Slight causes often lead to painful consequences. When Henry, their oldest child, had gained the age of five years, the father proposed that he should be sent to school. To this Arabella objected. She thought him yet too young.

"But *I* do not," was the rather domineering reply of Allison.

The manner in which this was said was felt more than the words. From the first, she had never opposed her husband in anything, meekly submitting to his will, no matter how arbitrarily expressed. But the question that now came up concerned her child, and her love for it not only gave her clear perceptions, but also the resolution to express any difference of opinion she might hold in a matter affecting its welfare.

"I can teach him at home all that it is yet necessary for him to learn," she said, mildly, yet firmly. "He already knows his letters, and is beginning to combine them into words."

"But I wish him to go to school ; and I think a father ought to be the best judge in matters concerning his son's education. Already you are beginning to spoil the boy by over-indulgence ; for this, if no other reason, he ought to be in a good school, under a judicious teacher."

"But consider, dear, how very young he is." This was said by Mrs. Allison in a trembling voice. "Only five years old ; and he is such a timid, gentle, sweet little fellow. I don't see that he is spoiled in anything. I don't know that I indulge him in what is not right. He minds every-

thing I say. Does he not do the same to you? I am sure he does."

"It is in that very timidity and backwardness that you are spoiling him. I wish him to become a man, not a woman. If he is so very gentle, it is high time that he should put on more of a boyish character. He will have to take it rough-and-tumble with the world by-and-by, and the sooner we begin to educate him for what is to come, the better. So, make up your mind to have him sent to school at once."

"I cannot do that, Mr. Allison," was the wife's firm reply.

"Humph! cannot you, indeed!" This was spoken sneeringly. Its effect was to rouse up the mind of Arabella.

"No, I cannot," she replied; "he is my child as well as yours. My interest in him is as deep as yours; and I claim a mother's right to have a voice in all that concerns him. I do not ask to have my own way, and I cannot consent to let you decide all questions that regard our children by mere dictation. I will yield my judgment as far as I can to yours, and I ask, as an act of justice, that you will consider my reasons as entitled to some consideration."

Never before had Mrs. Allison spoken to her husband with so much spirit and firmness. He was surprised for a moment, and then retorted with a look and tone of contempt.

"Your judgment! your reasons! I would not give *that* for them!" snapping his fingers.

A quick shiver ran through the delicate frame of his wife. It was the first time his indifference

towards her, and the real contempt he entertained, had been uttered without disguise. The shock was too great. Her face grew deadly pale in a moment, and, sinking down upon the sofa where she had been half reclining, she fell over, to all appearance perfectly lifeless.

For twelve hours she lay in this state of suspended animation, and then vitality again came forth from the interior regions where it had retired, and restored the circle of life.

Allison deemed it prudent not to press the matter, the agitation of which had produced such unhappy consequences. Little Henry was not sent to school until he had entered upon his sixth year.

CHAPTER XV.

THE NEGLECTED WIFE.

Two years afterward, Arabella suffered from another attack, brought on by the conduct of her husband. In each of these a new physician had been called in. The reason was, that the cause, as existing in himself, might not be traced out, even by the medical attendant. His love of reputation was strong, and this, seeing that his manner towards his wife produced, when not too well guarded, such dreadful results, caused him, after that time, to treat her with more apparent consideration than he had been in the habit of doing. Even this

was grateful to the suffering wife, as little reason as she had to believe in its sincerity.

Time passed on, and the lawyer rose into eminence at the bar. His aid was sought in difficult cases, where large fees tempted him to put forth the very best energies of his mind. Notwithstanding the failure to grasp the golden prize at which he had looked so long that he felt a right in it, there was no lack of means to enable him to live in a style suited to his taste. His talents brought him wealth.

As there was little at home to hold his affections there, he spent but a small portion of his time in the society of his wife, who rarely stepped beyond her threshold, and knew but little of what was passing in the gay world around her. She had now three children. They occupied her whole attention. Anxious to keep them within the pure atmosphere of home, she devoted much time to their instruction, so as to make their father satisfied in respect to their intellectual progress. The oldest boy went to school. This the father desired, and she did not object.

It was a thing of ordinary occurrence for Mr. Allison to be away until midnight. Gentlemen's parties, or other engagements of a like nature, were usually given at first as the reason; but the statement of any reason at all soon ceased. The husband went and came, as suited his own pleasure, thinking not, or caring not for the heart his coldness and indifference was breaking.

Thus things had gone on, year after year, until Mrs. Allison was little more than a hermit. None saw her beyond the precincts of her own home.

Her husband thought little about her, and cared less, except so far as her pale face, drooping form, and sad, patient look, rebuked him for neglect.

One day, late in the afternoon, a note was handed in by some one, unsealed, and addressed to her. She opened it, and read the contents. Only consciousness enough remained to crush it into her bosom for concealment, when she fell upon the floor in the swoon, to restore her from which Doctor Arlington, as has been seen, was summoned. The contents of that note were such as to prevent their declaration here. It is enough to say that they were of a character to inflict upon the heart of a virtuous wife a wound that no balm can heal.

At the same time that this note was left at his dwelling, another was thrown into the office of Mr. Allison, giving him notice of the fact. The deed was prompted by disappointment and revenge. It was the work of one who had long since laid aside virtue and humanity. No sooner had Allison received intelligence of what had been done, than, in alarm for the consequences, he hastened home. When he found his wife insensible, he understood too well the cause. If he needed confirmation, he had it in the contents of the note she had received, which he found in the folds of the dress that covered her bosom. It was instantly destroyed.

The reader now understands the case much better than even Doctor Arlington, who visited his patient early on the morning succeeding her restoration to consciousness. He found her in a very low state, and altogether indisposed to answer even the questions that were put to her professionally. Her husband was not present.

"How is Mrs. Allison to-day?" asked the wife of Doctor Arlington, when her husband joined her at the dinner-table.

The doctor shook his head, and looked grave.

"Not worse, I hope?" Flora said, in a concerned voice.

"No, not worse than she was yesterday, but very little better than she was last night. The fact is, I don't know what to make of her case. There is something wrong. If there ever was a heart-broken woman, she is one. I never saw just such an expression upon any face, nor just such a look out of any eyes. Her husband was not with her. He had already left the house, although it was quite early."

"Poor Arabella!" Flora said, the tears starting to her eyes. "Ten years ago she was the most light-hearted, happy girl I knew. To think that so hard a fate awaited her, for whom life seemed all sunshine and gladness. And Emily—my old friend Emily, where can she be? How does it fare with her? Badly, I fear. Mr. Whitney was not a man of sound principles. He had not the qualities of mind required to make a woman truly happy. It pains me when I think of her. Ah, it makes the heart sad to look back in life, and recall the bright young faces of many maidens who grew up with us side by side, and then to glance around in search of them now. Here and there may be found a countenance over which has been thrown, it is true, a veil of thoughtfulness, but which still wears, at times, the smile that played upon it in younger days. But where are the many, and how do they fare? Some have gone down into the grave

in the freshness of virgin beauty ; others have wandered far away from their early homes and early friends by the side of a brother or husband ; and others may still be seen, occasionally, in the old places that knew them years ago. But few of these seem happy."

"They may be happier, Flora, than you think," the doctor replied, smiling. "The cares of life make us thoughtful, and, to the eyes of others, sad."

"True ; and I know that I am too apt to think no one can be as happy as myself."

"And why not, Flora ?"

"Because I think no one can have so kind, so good, so excellent a husband." The face of Mrs. Arlington glowed as she spoke.

"Too partial, my dear Flora," returned Arlington, with a smile of affection. "But, besides you, there are many—very many happy wives. I see both sides of the picture ; and one is as bright as the other is dark. Too many a fond, trusting girl, throws herself away upon a man who is unworthy of her, and pays for her mistake the penalty of a whole lifetime of misery. But others act more wisely ; and this number is large. The pale cheek and sunken eye do not always spring from mental causes."

Doctor Arlington visited Mrs. Allison again on the next day, but there was little apparent improvement. Life played but feebly in her pulses. It was, indeed, a question in his mind, whether she were not actually sinking instead of growing better. He met her husband this time.

"What do you think of her, doctor ?" he asked,

with some concern upon his face, as they left her chamber together.

"I hardly know what to say," was the reply. "She may be better than she was yesterday, but the change, if any, is to me imperceptible."

The husband looked thoughtful, but said no more. He attended Doctor Arlington to the door, and bowed to him in silence as he left the house.

There was little or no change perceptible at the doctor's next visit. Mrs. Allison still lay in a state of semi-consciousness.

"Bring me," said he to the domestic who attended in the sick chamber, "the little girl I saw down stairs just now. What is her name?"

"Margaret."

"Bring her up stairs to me."

In a few minutes the attendant brought into the room a lovely child, scarce two years of age, around whose blooming cheeks played a mass of sunny ringlets. The doctor lifted her in his arms, and taking her to the bedside, held her so that she could look down upon her mother's face.

"Mamma!" instantly burst from the lips of the child, in glad accents, as she bent forward eagerly towards her mother.

The eyes of the half-unconscious invalid flew open at the sound of her darling's voice. A feeble smile lit up her almost inanimate face. As she reached her arms towards the child, the doctor gently laid it within them. Hope for the mother, if not for the wife, revived as he saw the emotion with which that dear one was held to her bosom, and marked the fervent kisses that were imprinted upon its lips. After giving directions to

take the child away at the end of ten or fifteen minutes, and restore it again should the mother ask for it, Doctor Arlington retired.

Towards evening he called again. There was a change for the better. The pulse of the invalid beat less feebly; the hue of her countenance was not so death-like. Little Margaret was seated upon the bed, amusing herself with some toys. The mother's eyes were upon the child.

"Dear little one!" said Doctor Arlington, putting his hand upon the head of Margaret, and playing with her golden hair, that had been sweetly curled by the nurse, who perceived, instinctively, the worth of the doctor's prescription.

Mrs. Allison's eyes brightened. The doctor had spoken of the child purposely, to see how far the mother's feelings had become active. The result assured him that there was now hope of her recovery. In this he was not mistaken. The mother's love for her offspring won her back to life. For her children's sakes, she once more took up her burdens, that were grievous to be borne. At the expiration of a few weeks, she was so far recovered as no longer to need a medical attendant. Doctor Arlington parted from her, at his final visit, with feelings of deep commiseration. He saw that her existence was a living death. What she farther suffered he knew not. He was never again summoned to attend her.

CHAPTER XVI.

A GAMBLING HUSBAND.

WE will now transport our readers to a Southern city—Charleston, and into a small room of a third-rate hotel there. In this we find a woman and two young children, alone, at midnight. The children are asleep, but the woman is sitting up, engaged in sewing. Her countenance, that of a woman in the prime of life, is care-worn. At intervals she pauses in her work, listens for a few moments, and then, with a half-suppressed sigh, resumes it.

This was continued until after the clock had announced the hour of two. Then a man entered the hotel, and ascending quietly, opened the door of the room just mentioned, and glided in.

"Emily!" he said, a little sternly, when he perceived that the woman was not in bed and asleep, "I shall get angry with you if this is continued. You must not sit up so late."

"It's no use for me to go to bed, Charles," was the low-spoken reply; "I cannot sleep while you are out."

Nothing more was said. The wife, for such was her relation to the man, laid aside her work, and both retired to rest.

At an early hour she left her pillow, and dressed herself and children. The husband still slept on, and continued to do so until eleven o'clock. Then

he arose, and went away without speaking a word, except to the children, who prattled around and seemed to annoy more than please him. A few minutes after his departure there was a tap at the door of the room he had left. His wife opened it, and found the barkeeper with a bill for the last two months' boarding.

"Mr. Whitney has just gone out," she said; "I will hand it to him as soon as he returns."

"Do so, if you please," the man said, in a respectful tone. Then, as if reluctantly, he added, "And say to him that Mr. T—— wishes it settled at once."

Emily—the reader has of course recognised her—shut, with a deeply-drawn sigh, the door, as the barkeeper turned away. Then sitting down, she remained thoughtful for some time. From this state a thrice-urged request from one of her children aroused her.

In the mean time, Whitney, after leaving the house, went to a refectory, and calling for a glass of liquor, drank it off slowly, helping himself freely, as he did so, to the lunch that had been placed on the bar. This was all the food usually taken by him before dinner. While thus engaged, a man placed his hand upon his shoulder, saying in a familiar, but low tone, as he did so,

"I have been looking for you all the morning, Whitney. There is good game abroad to-day."

The two then retired to a private room up stairs, whither the new-comer ordered a bottle of wine.

"What is the nature of the game?" asked Whitney, bending over towards his companion with eager interest, as soon as they were seated. "I'm

cursed low. This very day I owe for three months' board, and if I don't manage a part of it, I'm afraid old 'T—— will turn my wife and children out of doors ere a week passes over their heads. Poor Emily! it makes me sick when I look at her; and she is so mild and patient. I would not speak a harsh word to her for the world; and yet I am breaking her heart, I know. She sits up regularly until I get home, whether I am out until twelve, one, two, or three o'clock. If I were to stay out all night, she would not go to bed at all. I sometimes wish I were dead."

"Nonsense, man! You are too chicken-hearted by half," returned the friend, gayly. "I never saw the woman yet who could make me put on the lugubrious phiz you now wear. I believe I've got a wife, and half a dozen responsibilities, somewhere; but I never trouble myself about them."

"Well, what's in the wind to-day?" Whitney said, after a little while, throwing off by a powerful effort, aided by two or three glasses of wine taken in quick succession, his gloomy feelings.

"Something worth while, I assure you. Nothing less than a young planter from the up-country, with the cash for a large crop in his pocket-book. He's quite green, and full of his own importance."

"Where is he?"

"At the ——."

"Well?"

"You must bring him in to-night."

"If I can."

"You must. If you let him slip through your fingers, you and I are done."

"I haven't a dollar. Last night I won fifty from

a young clerk, but he proved in the end too much for me, not only getting back all he had lost, but stripping me of every cent."

"That was a poor business. You will never make your fortune in our profession, unless as a whipper-in. You are capital at that, however. Here is a ten-dollar bill. Use it skilfully, and we'll divide handsomely to-morrow morning."

After putting the bill into his pocket-book, Whitney drank another glass of wine, and then left the refectory alone and proceeded to the —— Hotel. He had first taken an accurate description of the young man. He found him reading a newspaper in one of the parlours. Seating himself near by, with a paper in his own hand, he commenced reading also. Soon a paragraph of unusual interest arrested his attention, causing him to say aloud, as if involuntarily,

"That's a serious affair, really!"

The young planter raised his head and looked towards the stranger, half inquiringly.

"Did you see that?" asked Whitney, pointing with his finger to a particular part of the paper he held in his hand.

"No; what is it?"

"The late affair in New-Orleans."

"No."

"Some black-leg scoundrel, it appears, came across a young planter from the Red River country, whose pockets were well lined with cash. By some hocus-pocus or other, he enticed him into some den, and there cheated him out of every dollar he had. In a fit of desperation, the young man blew out his brains. It is said that he left a

lovely wife, to whom he had but just been married. A sad affair, truly !”

“It is indeed,” returned the young countryman ; “but I’m sorry for one thing.”

“What is that ?”

“That the fellow had not blown out the gambler’s brains instead of his own. There would have been a moral power in that.”

“You are right,” replied Whitney, with promptness. “If an example of that kind were made now and then, it would have a good effect.”

“No doubt of it ; but a man who is weak enough to let one of these fellows approach, and then lure him off, deserves to lose his money. I should like to see the man who could make such a fool of me.”

“So should I. He would have a harder row to hoe than ever he attempted in his life before.”

“I’m of the same opinion in regard to my own case. Several planters from my section of the country have been caught and fleeced ; but they must have been blind or drunk. Any black-leg is welcome to all he can get out of me.”

“Ditto say I,” returned Whitney ; “but isn’t it surprising how men can become so utterly regardless of the rights of their fellows as to go regularly to work to entrap and cheat them out of the reward of their honest toil ?”

“It certainly is ; but it is a painful evidence of man’s deep depravity.”

“If I had my way, I would make the penalty for gambling ten times as severe as it is.”

“I would agree with you there. It is a most detestable vice.”

In this way, Whitney led his intended victim to form an idea of his character as the very opposite to what it really was. A stranger in Charleston, and feeling the want of some one to talk to, the planter met his advances more than half way. From gamblers the conversation changed to other topics. Whitney was well informed in political matters, and ascertaining the bias of the planter in regard to the two great questions then agitating the public mind, readily came over to the same side, and eloquently advocated the leading measures of the party. Satisfied with the favourable impression made, Whitney then effected an engagement, and left the stranger. An hour after, they met, seemingly by accident, in the street. Whitney showed a disposition to pass on, but the stranger paused, and asked him if he would not step into the bar of a house opposite and take a drink with him. To this he consented.

"Have you been about the city much?" he asked of the planter, as they returned to the street.

"No," was the reply; "I have been so much engaged in business until to-day, that I have not seen anything."

"I have an hour or two to spare. If you have any curiosity, I will show you about."

"You are very kind, sir. I will accept your offer without a word."

From that time until the dinner hour, Whitney kept the unsuspecting stranger's mind constantly interested.

"You are a planter, I believe?" he said during the morning.

"Yes, and I came here to sell my crop."

"Have you disposed of it?"

"Oh yes."

"Who bought?"

"Hatfield and Horner."

"At eleven?"

"Yes."

"We are above them a quarter."

"Indeed! Are you in the cotton-brokerage business?"

"Oh yes. I belong to one of the oldest firms in Charleston. For the last five years we have done the most extensive business here. The reason is, we always give the highest possible price the market will afford."

"What is the name of your house?"

"Lily, Frogmore, & Co. I am a junior partner."

"Ah, indeed! The reputation of your house is well known throughout our country. I was advised to put my crop into your hands; but I brought letters to Hatfield and Horner, and therefore gave them the management of my cotton. You think I could have obtained a quarter of a cent more?"

"I know you could. We would have given it."

"I wish we had met before; but it is too late now—regrets are useless."

During a pause in a subsequent conversation, the planter said,

"You will dine with me?"

"Thank you; but I believe I must ask to be excused."

"Are you a married man?"

"No."

"Then I will take no excuse. No one will miss you."

Whitney affected still to hesitate, but the warm-hearted Southron would not be refused. At dinner they drank freely, but the former could bear twice the number of glasses.

"Have you seen the country around Charleston?" asked Whitney, while they sat smoking, half an hour after the removal of the cloth.

"No," was the reply.

"I have a pair of splendid ponies. If agreeable to you, I will have them brought round. I usually drive out in the afternoon."

"I will accompany you with pleasure."

Whitney then went to the bar, and giving the barkeeper a five-dollar bill, told him to send round to a livery stable close at hand, and get for him the handsomest buggy wagon, and the most splendid pair of horses that could be furnished. Half an hour brought them to the door. In these the two men flourished about the city, and into the surrounding country, highly enjoying themselves.

Nothing would do but that Whitney must return with the planter and take tea. Seeming anxious to get off, he yielded, finally, to importunities that were pressed upon him. After tea *he* proposed a visit to the theatre. No objection, of course. A new company had just appeared in town, with sundry attractions. The curtain fell at eleven o'clock, and the planter and his interesting friend left the building with the delighted crowd.

CHAPTER XVII.

FLEECING A PLANTER.

DURING the afternoon and evening that Whitney and the planter were together they drank frequently, sometimes at the suggestion of one, and sometimes the other. Whitney had been more guarded as to the quantity taken at each successive "drink;" and, besides, he could bear as much again as the other. When they stepped from the theatre, the planter was not in a very sane state; many indications of this had been seen by Whitney while the play was in progress.

"You remember," said the latter, as they walked towards the hotel, arm-in-arm, "what we were talking about this morning? The subject, in fact, that made us acquainted?"

"Oh yes; about the young man in New-Orleans who was such a fool as to blow his brains out."

"Yes, that was it. He got into the company of a regular sharper, who fleeced him in less than no time. One of your cut-throat black-legs."

"The only thing about it that vexed me," returned the stranger, "was, that the chap didn't put his pistol to the cheating scoundrel's ear instead of his own. It could have been just as easily done."

"Just as easily; and certainly a much more rational proceeding," chimed in Whitney. "The world would have been rid of another villain."

"Truly said. Get me into such a predicament, and see how neatly I'd do the thing."

There was an earnestness about the manner in which this was said that sounded rather unpleasantly to the ear of Whitney ; but he trusted to its being mere braggadocio. The time had now come for him to bring the game he had been playing all day with such consummate skill to a termination. This required some address ; but the "pigeon" was in a very good condition, and quite ready to be "spitted."

"Well, I believe we have seen about all that is worth looking after?" he said, pausing a short distance from the public-house, "unless you have the curiosity to look into one of those execrable places, well named 'hells.' There are two or three in this neighbourhood. I never was inside of any of them but once in my life, and then I was in search of an infatuated friend. But it might be a matter of interest to you just to see how such things are managed. I merely mention it. If you had rather not, I'm sure I have no curiosity in regard to the matter."

"Can you go in and come away without attracting attention?"

"Oh, certainly. No one will take any notice of you."

"Then I should like to go above all things in the world. I want to know how the thing is done."

"Well, just as you like," Whitney said, indifferently. "Let me see. Where shall we go first? Oh, yes! we'll drop into Corbini's. That's worth a visit. It's close at hand into the bargain."

The two companions then turned down a dark-looking street, along which they proceeded for the distance of two or three hundred yards, when they paused before what seemed a house of entertainment. And so it appeared only to be—at least to the countryman—on entering it; for the first thing that met his eye was a handsome bar, with two or three attendants, around which a number of persons were standing, some talking, some eating oysters, and others drinking. The “pigeon” had taken quite as much as Whitney wished him to take. Still, he insisted on another drink. Lemonade was proposed, and agreed to; so they took a glass of lemonade together.

“Now let us go up and look about us,” said Whitney.

“Up where?”

“Up stairs into the gambling-room. No one will know us.”

Saying this, Whitney led the way, and the other followed. The first room they entered was richly furnished with carpets, marble-slab tables, and mirrors. There was no one in it but themselves. After looking around for some time, and admiring its arrangement, they passed into a second. There they found a party of four at “brag.” The individuals composing this party were so intent upon their game, that they only glanced at the strangers, and then became entirely absorbed in their occupation. Two considerable piles of money lay upon each side of the table. Portions of these were every now and then changed from one to the other, backward and forward, according as the game progressed. The planter looked on for some time, until he

became quite interested. Whitney at length touched his arm, and the two passed into a third apartment. Several tables were in this room, and two or three little groups engaged at cards. One or two men were walking about, as mere spectators, looking first at one table and then at another. As Whitney and his new friend came in, one of them advanced to the former, and taking him cordially by the hand, said, in a low tone,

“Why, hallo, Bob! what, in the name of seven wonders, are you doing here? It’s about the last place in all creation I should expect to see you.”

“And I might ask the same question of you—though, like myself, I suppose you have come out of mere curiosity, to see what is to be seen; but let me make you acquainted with my friend, Mr. Melton, from P——. This, Mr. Melton, is Mr. Hopewell, of the house of Thompson, Hopewell, and Smith.”

Hands were shaken and beavers tipped quite gracefully, when Whitney went on.

“Mr. Melton and I have been riding about most of the afternoon to see what was worth seeing in our environs. To-night we went to the play; and now we are here to finish the day in sight-seeing. I thought it would be a rare treat for my friend to get a glance within this charmed circle. It must be a new world to him.”

“Indeed it is,” said the planter, “quite a new world; and much indebted am I for your kindness in taking so much trouble to oblige me.”

“There are many more rooms besides those we have yet been in,” Whitney returned to this, moving towards a door that seemed to open into a suite of

rooms beyond. "Won't you walk around with us, Mr. Hopewell?"

"Oh, certainly, with the greatest pleasure;" and Mr. Hopewell joined them in their perambulations. After going through several apartments, and lingering among them for some time, they came to a small but more richly-furnished room than any they had yet seen, far back from the street, in the third story of the building. A neat chandelier with a profusion of brilliants hung from the ceiling immediately over a table covered with a slab of beautiful variegated Italian marble. Upon this was a pack of cards, that looked as if they had never been handled, except for a very few times.

"Really this is beautiful!" ejaculated Whitney, gazing around for some moments with well-affected astonishment, and then quietly seating himself upon a sofa. His companions imitated his example.

"One can hardly believe that this handsome apartment is dedicated to the nefarious purposes that it is," the individual introduced as Hopewell said.

"It seems scarcely possible," replied Whitney; "and yet, it has seen the ruin of many a poor fellow."

"No doubt of it;" and as Hopewell said this, he drew a chair up to the table and commenced looking over the pack of cards. Some remark about them brought Whitney to his side, and the planter, of course.

"It would be quite a novel affair, wouldn't it, Bob," remarked Hopewell, laughing, "for us to take a quiet game here, with the very cards that have done so much mischief?"

Whitney shook his head. "Perhaps my friend here would rather not."

"Oh no, gentlemen, I have not the slightest objection to a game or two. I am very fond of whist," replied Melton, promptly.

"Three can't play at whist," objected Whitney.

"I saw Harry Sanders down stairs," the man called Hopewell immediately said. "Harry Sanders, of the firm of Max and Pimlico. I'll ask him to join us, if you've no objections."

"You may do so if you choose," Whitney replied, half indifferently.

Hopewell went down stairs, but returned in a short time with a fine, gentlemanly-looking individual, who was greeted by Whitney with familiarity. Between him and the planter an introduction took place. Then cotton-planting and cotton-selling were talked about for some time.

"But didn't you say that you wanted me to take a hand at whist?" Sanders at length remarked, interrupting the conversation.

"True," returned Hopewell; and the four at once surrounded the table.

We need not follow, step by step, the progress of the games that succeeded, nor go into a detail of the little artifices resorted to in order to induce the more than half-intoxicated planter to stake his money. It is sufficient to say that he was gradually led on and on, until he was fairly in the toils so skilfully laid for his feet. When he left that "infernal region," at an hour far advanced towards morning, he had seen the last of thirty thousand dollars pass from his trembling hands.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A MELANCHOLY HISTORY.

A FEW words only are required to enable the reader to understand the new and somewhat startling position in which he finds his former acquaintance, Charles Whitney. After his marriage he showed as little disposition to attend to business as before. It was in vain that his father remonstrated with him. Why should he vegetate in a counting-room, over old ledgers, or trouble his brains about the prices of goods, when his "old man" had enough for all his future wants? It was much more agreeable to spend his time in idle pleasure-taking, and he consulted his inclination rather than the wishes and judgment of his father. For a year or two, old Mr. Whitney allowed his son to draw whatever money he wanted; but, as his draughts grew heavier and heavier, while his attention to business was less and less constant, he felt it to be his duty to lay some restrictions upon him. This caused the young man to become excited, and betrayed him into rather hasty and imprudent remarks, the consequence of which was a separation between him and his father, attended by a material reduction of supplies.

During this time, Emily, his wife, had been treated by her husband with as much kindness as one like him was capable of showing to a woman.

He was away from her a great deal, and had nearly all of his pleasures independent of her. But still he was fond of his wife, and proud of her beauty. His manner, when at home, was uniformly kind. She did not complain of his absence, although she felt it keenly, and this prevented the occurrence of anything personally unpleasant between them.

Not long after the rupture which took place between Mr. Whitney and his son, the old man died, leaving to Charles twenty thousand dollars, as a sufficient sum to commence business upon if disposed to pursue any business, and quite sufficient to squander, if he felt no disposition to change his habits. Deeply incensed at his father, Whitney at first refused to touch the "pitiful sum" assigned to him by the will ; but the pressing demands of creditors, who had heard the rumour about his being cut off with a mere pittance, led him to change his mind. He took the money, and paid away five thousand dollars in the settlement of sundry bills. Instead, then, of seeking to invest the balance profitably, he continued his idle—alas ! that we should have to say, vicious—courses. His elegant establishment was still kept up. Brilliant entertainments were given as before ; and thus he wasted rapidly the little that remained. But worse than this. The pleasure-seeking sons of rich fathers move in a sphere beset with temptations hard to be resisted. In this sphere Whitney felt the force of strong allurements to evil. One of its most direful temptations is that of gaming. There is, in all large cities, a class of men who live upon the ruin of others—gamblers. A young man with plenty of money to spend, and plenty of time upon his

hands, is almost sure to be either entrapped or strongly tempted from virtue by some one of this class. The danger is imminent. The business of these men is to win money, instead of earning it by honourable industry in the various branches of trade, and they study their business thoroughly.

A man, whose profession was gambling, saw Whitney, understood him thoroughly, and resolved on making him a victim. He insinuated himself dexterously into his confidence, and then gradually led him away into the vice of gaming. After this, by accomplices, he won from him, while he yet had control of as much money as he wanted, large sums. After the death of his father, this man professed to feel a great interest in him, and held out, as a means of sustaining himself, the certain gains of his own profession, that was now openly declared. Hitherto, Whitney had not suspected that his friend was a principal, with an extensive arrangement of subordinates not only in New-York, but in various parts of the country. Under other circumstances, such a discovery would have been startling to him. Now it affected him differently. He soon learned many of the tricks of the profession, and entered upon their practice with some success. In return for the favours done him by his pretended friend, that individual managed, through one of his subordinates, whose relation was unsuspected by Whitney, to get at least ten thousand dollars of his legacy.

For about three years after his father's death, Whitney managed to keep up appearances; but at the end of that period, fortune turned upon him a less smiling countenance. During this time, his

irregular habits, and more especially his altered appearance and manner, troubled much the heart of his uncomplaining wife. Her face had become thoughtful—her eye dreamy. This change he could not help seeing, nor help feeling its silent rebuke. Had she questioned him too closely of his habits—had she complained of her loneliness—had she wept before him on account of neglect, his heart would have grown hard towards her; but the smile with which she always greeted his return, and the fond allurements with which she so unobtrusively strove to keep him by her side, made him feel for her much tenderness. The fading rose upon her cheek, whose delicate tints grew paler and paler every day, often awoke bitter upbraidings in his bosom. But it was too late, he deemed, to change his course.

Seven years had passed since her happy wedding-day, when Emily, seated by a window in a house far less imposing than the one she had lived in during the first five or six years of her married life, and far less elegantly arranged within, looked dreamily out upon the busy street, her thoughts unaffected by the scene before her. Two children were playing quietly about the room. A third, her first-born, was sleeping its mortal sleep. Three months before, it had fallen beneath the sickle of the reaper Death. The thoughts of the mother were with her lost one. While thus sadly musing, her husband, unexpectedly, came in. He sat down by her side, and taking her hand with more tenderness than he usually displayed, said, in a slightly hesitating voice,

“Emily, I shall have to leave New-York.”

The wife started, turned pale, and looked her husband earnestly and inquiringly in the face.

"I find it impossible to keep up here. I struggle hard" (in what business, Emily really did not know ; her husband had never ventured to inform her truly ; she had been easily satisfied by his vague accounts). "Still, it is of no use. New-York is not the place for me ; but I have an offer of business, if I will go South, that is very advantageous. Are you willing to go, Emily?"

"I will go anywhere with you, dear Charles," the wife said, leaning heavily against him as she spoke, and looking into his face with dim, but affectionate eyes. His unusual tenderness of voice and manner had touched her feelings. "But it will be hard to leave my mother. There is little in New-York besides her that has any power to hold me."

"If you had rather stay with her," Whitney said, after sitting thoughtful for some time, "I will not object. Money to meet your expenses can be regularly transmitted."

"Oh no, no, Charles !" she quickly returned, "I am ready to go with you anywhere. Am I not your wife ? and are not these your children ? We must not be separated."

In one month, Emily, with a sad, foreboding heart, parted with her mother. She sailed, with her husband and children, in a packet for New-Orleans. At that city she spent nearly two years, her husband absent from her most of the time. He was engaged in business up the river, and only visited New-Orleans about once in two or three months and then for only a few days or a week

He kept his wife moderately supplied with money, enough to meet her own and the children's wants. How he obtained this she did not certainly know, although, by this time, she more than guessed the truth.

One day, after the expiration of about two years, he was brought home in a very low state. He had been severely wounded (shot accidentally, he stated to Emily) in an affray, in which he was attacked by a man from whom he had won a considerable sum of money. The victim suspected, justly enough, that there had been foul play, and he sought revenge by an attempt to kill Whitney. In this he came very near being successful. The wound, which was from a rifle-pistol, proved to be a very dangerous one, and was rendered doubly so in consequence of a violent fever. From the effects of both combined, he was brought very near to death. As soon as he could be moved, he caused himself to be placed on board of a steamboat, and thus conveyed to New-Orleans. By the time he arrived there, he could sit up in a carriage, supported on either side by the captain and clerk of the boat. In this way he was taken home to his wife.

To Emily his sudden appearance in so alarming a condition was a dreadful shock. As he gradually recovered, she urged him not to leave her again, or, if his business still required him to be so much of his time in the upper country, to take her with him. To this he replied that he should not go on the river again; that he would remain in New-Orleans. This he did for some months, then he removed to Charleston, South Carolina, where

the reader has been introduced to him as an agent in a very disreputable affair indeed. Here he did not meet with the success, as a regular gambler, that had crowned his efforts on the Mississippi and Ohio, in the steamboats of which he had spent a greater portion of his time. Often he was much straitened. At last, finding that he lacked the peculiar ability required to ensure success, he connected himself with the keeper of an extensive "hell," as a "stool pigeon," or one whose business it is to entice people by deceptive arts, and bring them in contact with men who will either win their money by superior skill, or cheat them out of it by playing unfairly. Even in this detestable calling he had hard work to make enough to minister to the wants of his family—or, rather, to minister to their wants, and supply himself with the means of dashing about, and spending freely with the free. From the best hotel in the place, where he had at first lived, he found himself compelled to go down to one less expensive, and again to descend still lower. We find him and his family in this last position, their bill for boarding, the accumulation of three months, unpaid. Emily is greatly changed. Poorly clad, broken down in health and spirits, toiling on early and late for her children, and yet clinging to her husband with undying affection—to that husband who might have lifted her up instead of depressing her—who might have made her sky bright with sunshine, instead of dark with clouds.

CHAPTER XIX.

DREADFUL CONSEQUENCES.

It was about nine o'clock on the morning of the day succeeding the one on which the occurrences took place that have been described in the chapter before the last, that a man, in a disturbed condition, entered the store of Lily, Frogmore, and Co., and asked to see the junior partner of the house.

"I am the individual," returned the man he addressed.

"You?" and the stranger looked incredulous.

"Yes, sir, I am he. Do you wish to see me *particularly*?"

"I want to see the junior partner of the firm of Lily, Frogmore, and Co."

"There is but one junior partner, and I am the man."

"Is Mr. Lily in?"

"Yes, sir. 'There he stands in the store."

The stranger's eye followed quickly the direction given; but as soon as he saw Mr. Lily, he shook his head.

"And now, be so kind as to point me out Mr. Frogmore," he said.

"Here he is," turning to a man close by.

Again the interlocutor shook his head. He now seemed confused, and stood thoughtful for some moments. Then he said,

"A cursed villain, calling himself the junior partner of your house, has assisted to cheat me out of about thirty thousand dollars. I am now in search of him. My money or his life must come!" and the stranger ground his teeth with rage.

"That was doubtless but a trick to deceive you the more perfectly," replied the merchant, at once comprehending the situation of the stranger: "a gambler's stool pigeon has many characters."

"Yes, but he introduced me to several merchants in your city, with whose names and standing I am perfectly familiar. Mr. Hopewell, for instance."

"What kind of a looking man was Mr. Hopewell?"

"About your size and age, I should say, with a pair of black whiskers."

"Ha! ha! Another villanous deception. The real Mr. Hopewell is fifty years of age, and as unlike the man you describe as two persons can be."

This caused a new light to flash upon the mind of the planter, for he it was. He stood thoughtful for a little while, and then said,

"Yes, yes, I see it all now. It was a regular scheme to make me a victim; to fleece me out of the earnings of a whole year; but they've missed their man. They'll not find me fool enough to blow out my brains. No, no. I'll play on the other string. Here in this town I stay until I meet this 'junior partner,' if it be for ten years. He can't escape me. And when we do meet! Aha!" With a look of bitter revenge, as his voice lingered menacingly on the closing interjection, he turned away and left the store

All the morning he walked the streets of the city, or visited the various public houses, in search of Whitney, but without effect. The barkeeper of the hotel where he lodged knew his countenance well enough, but not his name, nor the place where he was to be found. After dinner the planter started out again. In the first tavern he entered, he saw Whitney, with two or three others, drinking at the bar. Walking up to him, he laid his hand heavily upon his shoulder. Whitney turned suddenly round, and seeing who it was that had made so familiar with him, affected anger at such an insult from a perfect stranger.

"And pray who are you, sir?" he asked, in return for the bold, fixed look that the other placed upon him.

"You don't know me, then, ha?" and Melton smiled sneeringly.

"I do not recollect your face, certainly," was the cool reply.

"You don't?"

"No." Whitney's face had on it a dark scowl as he said this.

"You don't remember anything about the young man in New-Orleans who fell among a parcel of thieving gamblers, and who was fool enough to blow out his brains in consequence, ha?"

"No, I don't."

"Perhaps this will assist your memory." The young man quickly drew a pistol, and placed it at the ear of Whitney, the hammer clicking sharply as the cold barrel touched his face. Half a dozen persons seized the partially deranged planter, but their interference only made the horrible catas-

trophe more certain. The pistol exploded, and Whitney fell instantly lifeless.

It would add but little either to the interest or moral of our story to present to the reader's mind a picture of the anguish that smote the heart of poor Emily when the awful tidings came to her of her husband's death, or when she bent over his ghastly corpse in a delirium of grief. She had loved him on through evil and good report. As their way grew darker and more toilsome, she drew the closer to his side, seeking rather to sustain than lean against him. He, with the children she had borne him, were all the world to her. For him, it may be said that his manner towards Emily was never harsh, though too often cold. He loved her as tenderly as such a man could love a wife, and was as kind to her as he was capable of being. This small return for her deep devotion was taken without a murmur; if it did not satisfy her heart, it did not weaken the strength of her affection. The sky that had for years bent over her was a dark and stormy sky. A single star glimmering through a rifted cloud was all the light it shed upon her weary way. Now that cloud had suddenly closed its severed fragments—the star was hidden forever!

Of the true cause of her husband's death, Emily remained ignorant. The full account of it, which appeared in the city papers of the next day, was not seen by her. All she knew was, that he had been suddenly assailed by one who mistook him for a person that had wronged him, and killed ere the mistake was discovered. After the funeral, a sufficient sum of money was placed in her hands

to convey her, with her children, to New-York. This was done by several of her husband's professional friends.

As for the planter, he was arrested, tried for murder, and acquitted. We give the fact. The principal in the affair left the city an hour after the death of his accomplice, with the booty he had gained, and was never afterward seen in Charleston. Thus terminated the affair, leaving at least one of the actors a wiser man.

CHAPTER XX.

THE WRECK OF EARLY HOPES.

"Poor Mrs. Allison!" was the sympathizing remark of Doctor Arlington, uttered almost involuntarily, as he sat musing on the evening after having dismissed her case. "She lives on only for her children."

"Mrs. Allison! Oh yes; how is she?" said the wife of the doctor, lifting her eyes from a newspaper she held in her hand.

"She is better than she was; but better only for the sake of her children. Nothing but her love for them keeps her alive. There is something very mysterious in her manner towards her husband. She seems to be struggling with herself to keep from loathing him. And he certainly has no affection for her. When I left him this morning, after informing him that my attendance was no

longer required, he thanked me coldly for what I had done, and said he hoped there would not be another recurrence of the disease that had rendered medical treatment necessary. I certainly hope there will not. If so, his conduct will be changed ; for that his treatment of her has something to do with the sudden illness from which she has just recovered, I have little doubt. To me it has been a very painful case. I can bear with professional composure to see the body wasting away under a disease that does not depend upon the patient's state of mind ; but when the mind's distress is so acute as to prostrate the physical system, my sympathies are all alive. The cause of Mrs. Allison's severe illness is evidently a mental one, and has particular reference to her marriage relation."

Mrs. Arlington did not reply to these remarks of her husband. They awakened thoughts which she did not wish to utter. They led her to contrast her own happy condition with what it must have been had she married the fascinating, but unprincipled individual who, at one time, had drawn out towards him her young affections. An inward shudder caused her heart momentarily to pause, as imagination pictured herself in the position of Allison's wife ; but the consciousness of a glad reality sent quickly a warm glow through her bosom.

A bright little boy came in at this moment, and taking his place upon his father's knee, began to relate the wonders he had seen in Broadway, while walking out that afternoon with the nurse. Mrs. Arlington resumed her newspaper, but soon interrupted the prattle of her child by saying, with some concern in her voice,

"Just listen, dear. 'Died on the 14th inst., Mrs. Emily Clarence, aged fifty-seven years.'"

"Mrs. Emily Clarence! who is she?" inquired the doctor.

"The mother of Mrs. Whitney."

"Indeed?"

"Yes; it is my old friend, Mrs. Clarence, in whose house I have spent many a happy hour. But where can her daughter be? I wonder if it is possible that she is in New-York? I really feel condemned to think that I have not, since our residence in the city, sought out Mrs. Clarence, and renewed our acquaintance. She was an excellent, kind-hearted, but rather weak woman. After my refusal of Mr. Allison's offer, Emily, influenced by her husband, I have no doubt, ceased to communicate with me by letter, as formerly; and, under the circumstances, I did not feel inclined to visit at her mother's, where I would be likely to meet her, especially as two notes written to her remained unanswered."

"I don't know that you have any particular cause for self-condemnation," the husband said; "I should think you acted pretty nearly right."

"Perhaps so. Still, I can't help wishing that I had made some effort to find Mrs. Clarence. Through her I should have learned whether Emily were still living, and, if alive, her condition. My old feelings for this pleasant friend of early years have not yet subsided. I often think of her with much interest."

"Is the residence of Mrs. Clarence given in the notice you have there?"

"No; there is nothing but what I have read to you."

"When did she die?"

"On the 14th."

"And this is the 21st of the month."

"Yes ; she has been dead for a week."

Here the conversation dropped again. While the doctor sported with his prattling child, the thoughts of his wife continued to rest upon her friend of other days ; and with these thoughts came also the yearnings of old affections. An hour after, the doctor was called out to see a patient. He did not return until a late hour.

At breakfast on the next morning, he was more than usually thoughtful and silent. Flora noticed this, and rightly conjecturing that he was occupied in some professional matter of more than ordinary interest, made no remark that referred to his absent-mindedness. That evening, after the little ones had retired, and they were alone, Doctor Arlington said,

"Flora, I met with a case to-day as strange, in some respects, as that of Mrs. Allison."

"What was it, dear?" his wife asked, eagerly.

"Strange as it may seem, I find that a lady whom I saw last evening is no other than your old friend, Mrs. Whitney."

"Why, husband!" exclaimed Flora, starting forward.

"Yes, it is true ; and she is almost as much a wreck as Mrs. Allison."

Mrs. Arlington looked into her husband's face with mute surprise.

"She is now," continued the doctor, "lying very ill at the house where her mother died. She arrived from Charleston, in a packet, two days

ago, with one child. She had two when she left; but the other sickened on the way, and was taken from the evil to come. I have learned that her husband, who for years has lived by gambling, became involved in some difficulty with a man from whom he had won a large sum of money, and that the man shot him dead. His wife then took her two children, and returned to New-York by sea, to find a home once more with her mother; but, as you are aware, that mother was dead. The death of her husband, under such terrible circumstances, shocked both mind and body; the loss of one of her children at sea, and then the dreadful news that her mother was likewise in the grave, completed the work. When called in, I found her body under the influence of a raging fever, and her mind in delirium."

"Dreadful!" ejaculated Mrs. Arlington.

"To-day there is some abatement of the fever, though her mind still wanders. She talks continually in a sad, mournful strain; sometimes incoherently, but often uttering whole sentences that express most touchingly how much she has suffered from loneliness and neglect. 'Oh, Charles,' she said once, 'why do you stay away so long, so very long? I sit up and work until I ache with weariness. There! it is three o'clock, and he hasn't come yet. Where does he stay so long—so long—oh! so very long?' A great deal like this she utters, with touching pathos."

"Does she look at all as she used to look?" asked Flora.

"I shouldn't have known her. The brow that was once so smooth is now seamed with many

lines ; there is no bloom upon her cheeks, now this and sallow ; her eye has lost its brightness ; she is indeed a wreck."

Tears were rolling down the face of Mrs. Arlington, as, rising from her chair, she came up to the doctor, and laying her cheek to his, while she drew her arm around his neck, murmured,

"Thank God for giving me a good husband !"

This little act of affection—these brief words—came from a full heart. Two of her friends had made shipwreck of all that is dear to a woman ; but her bark still moved gently on a summer sea. This thought, coming home to her so vividly, touched her heart, and brought forth the almost involuntary act and words that have been just recorded.

On the next morning it was agreed that Flora should accompany her husband in his visit to Mrs. Whitney. Her heart fluttered as she ascended to the chamber where her old friend lay, after entering the house in which Mrs. Clarence had lived with a distant relative for some years previous to her death. From the door of the sick room, she moved with a quiet step to the bed upon which Emily rested, and there, by the side of her husband, in fact, leaning upon his arm, she stood looking down upon the pale, shrunken, and marred face of Emily for nearly a minute. The sick woman slept. Her quiet breathing, and the moisture that rested upon her forehead, showed that her fever had left her, while her calm, infant-like sleep indicated the return of reason.

"She is better," the doctor said, in a low tone, to the woman who had the care of her.

"Yes, she seems better. Her fever left her several hours ago," was replied.

The sound of voices reached the ear of Mrs. Whitney. Her lids unclosed, and she looked up with surprise to find that strangers were standing beside her. For a moment or two she closed her eyes as if to shut out an illusion; then opened them again, to find that she had only looked upon what was real.

"Emily," said Mrs. Arlington, in a low, earnest voice, bending over towards her old friend as she spoke.

The sick woman started at the sound of her voice, while her cheeks flushed, and her eyes scanned eagerly the countenance of the strangers.

"Emily, do you not know me?"

"Flora! Flora! Oh! is it indeed you?" quickly burst from the lips of Mrs. Whitney, as she rose up from the pillow upon which she lay, and threw herself forward upon the bosom of Mrs. Arlington.

"Yes, yes, my dear friend!" returned Flora, as she drew her arms around the almost skeleton form of Emily, and held it tightly to her heart.

"To think that we should ever meet thus," the almost heart-broken creature said, an hour afterward, as Mrs. Arlington sat holding her hand, at the same time that she caressed a flaxen-haired child, some four years old, the sweet image of her mother, that had climbed up confidently into her lap. In the hour that had passed, much of Mrs. Whitney's sad history had been related, while mutual tears mingled freely. "To think that, a few years ago, all was so bright above and around, and so full of promise; and that now, all is sorrow and

gloom. Ah, Flora, life's early promise is a cheating dream!"

To this sentiment Mrs. Arlington could not respond. To her, early promises had been more than fulfilled. She had chosen wisely her lot; the mere external form of good was not enough for her; she had looked for the substance within the form. Her friend, deceived by the semblances of good, had rested her all in life upon an unstable foundation, that had crumbled beneath her, when it was too late to seek another habitation.

All the assurances of undecayed affections, all the consolations and hopes that she could present to her mind, were freely offered by Mrs. Arlington. They had their effect, small though the appearance was, upon the mind of Emily.

"You will come and see me again, will you not, Flora?" she said, as she clung to the hand of her friend, who had risen at last to leave her; "there is now no one left to care for me, or to love me."

"Yes, Emily, I will come again, and often. I am glad to find you so much better than I had expected, from the doctor's account of your situation when he left you yesterday. You will soon be able to walk out, I hope, and then I shall expect you to be one of my most frequent, as you certainly will be one of my most welcome visitors."

Then kissing tenderly the moist cheek of her unhappy friend, Mrs. Arlington left her and returned home.

CHAPTER XXI.

CONCLUSION.

"MRS. WHITNEY is still recovering, I suppose," the wife of Doctor Arlington said to him one evening, about a week after her first visit to Emily. She had seen her nearly every day since. Not on that day, nor the day previous, however.

"Yes," returned the doctor, "she still continues to improve; but to-day I thought she seemed more than usually depressed. She must be lonely and desolate."

"Desolate enough. She seems to feel acutely the loss of her husband. 'He was always kind to me,' she said, the last time I was with her. 'He was not like other men; he could not struggle successfully with the world; but he was good to me. If he were disturbed by anything that occurred from home, it never caused him to speak harshly to his wife; though, to have shared all his thoughts, to have known all he felt, I could have borne even unkindness.'"

"He was her husband; and she best knows what was good in him. But that, in resting upon the love of such a man as he was—a man without honest and honourable principles—she laid her head upon a pillow of thorns, the result has sadly proved. She may still love, in memory, that pillow; but the wounds it has given will never cease

to afflict her while life in this world remains. Time may heal them over ; but the scars will be left, and there will occur seasons when they will cause her bitter anguish."

"The cause of her unusual depression may arise from the destitution that threatens her," Mrs. Arlington said. "I learned, in a conversation that I had with the woman in whose house she is, that there was some doubt whether the small legacy on which her mother had lived would be continued to Emily. She has nothing herself; and, if this should fail, she will be thrown entirely upon her personal resources for a subsistence for herself and child. I wish you would make some inquiries into the matter, and see if anything can be done to secure it."

This Doctor Arlington promised to do at once. He found, on examination, that there was some danger of the legacy passing into other hands than Mrs. Whitney's, although he soon learned enough in regard to it to make him satisfied that to her it rightly belonged. Prompt and judicious measures were taken by him to prevent the wrong that was intended. He was successful. Instead of being left penniless, and almost helpless, Mrs. Whitney came into the receipt of three hundred dollars a year, which gave her every external comfort she desired. On this, blessed with the friendship of Mrs. Arlington and her husband—the latter much more highly appreciated now than in former times—she lived a more peaceful life than she had known for many long years. The world presented to her a new aspect. She looked beyond the surface, and clearly discriminated the real from the apparent;

but wisdom had come too late to give her its choicest, because its earliest and best fruits.

Time passed on pleasantly with the amiable, yet strong-minded doctor, and his lovely wife. Each day brought its renewed blessings, for which they were humbly thankful to Him whose gifts are ever good, whether they appear in the storm or the sunshine—the drear winter, with its snows covering and protecting the good seed that has been sown in the rich and tender soil of early years ; or in the genial spring and warmer summer-time, bringing forth and ripening the grain, filling the vines with rich foliage, and swelling the grape into delicious maturity.

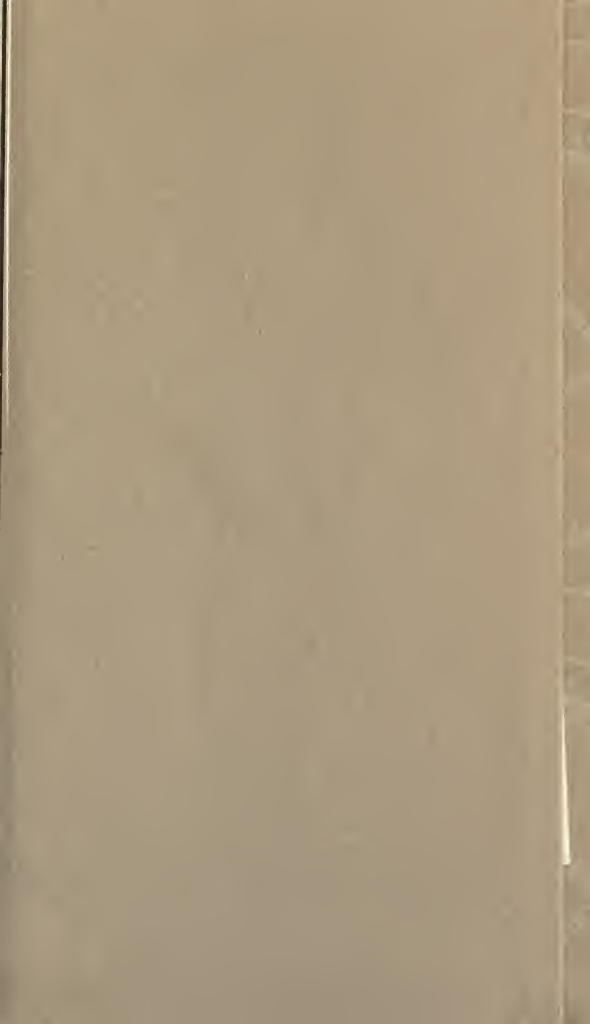
A year after the return of Emily from the South, Mrs. Allison died. One more shock severed the golden cord of life. She went down into her grave unwept and unhonoured by a husband who had never loved her.

Thus closes our narrative. Its lessons are too plain, it seems to us, to need a single word more. Much has been written in the fictitious histories of the past, much continues to be written in the fictitious histories of the present day, about love and marriage. They form themes of inexhaustible interest, and no wonder. They are central to all things. All that exists external to them must be tinged with their quality ; for from centres everything proceeds in just order towards externals, or circumferences. Whatever is the quality of a man's real thoughts in regard to marriage, will be the quality of his moral life. If he does not regard

marriage as the holiest of all relations, and does not enter into it from pure ends, its bands will rest neither upon him nor the unfortunate being he has called by the name of wife, like silken fetters, all unfelt. As years accumulate, and what is within comes more and more into manifest life, that is, is less concealed from the pressure of external causes, such as love of reputation, place, or some other motive, married partners who are not united by a genuine love of each other's moral beauties, are less guarded about displaying their real feelings. Then indeed comes the winter of old age, in which no green thing cheers the eye, and no mild south wind ever and anon warms the sunken cheek. Few of our writers of fiction have gone deep enough into these subjects. Few have understood the real quality of the things presented—few have comprehended the nature of a marriage union. Our own feeble efforts have in them only a glimmering of the real truth. Such as they are, we give them forth, trusting that they will at least do some good; that the crude illustrations and vague hints presented may become thought-inspiring to other minds; and other reapers enter the field from which we have taken only a few ripe shocks, and bear thence a rich and abundant harvest.

THE END.





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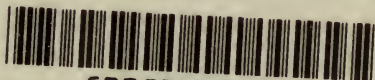
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